THE ABBOT.

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G. M. Birds
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THE

ABBOT.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "WAVERLEY."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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THE ABBOT;

BEING

THE SEQUEL

OF

THE MONASTERY.

Aug. 2004 (SIP)

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CHAPTER I.

Youth! thou wear'st to manhood now,
Darker lip and darker brow,
Statelier step, more pensive mien
In thy face and gait are seen:
Thou must now brook midnight watches,
Take thy food and sport by snatches;
For the gambol and the jest,
Thou wert wont to love the best,
Graver follies must thou follow,
But as senseless, false, and hollow.

Life, a Poem.

Young Roland Græme now trotted gaily forward in the train of Sir Halbert Glendinning. He was relieved from his most galling apprehension,—the encounter of the scorn and taunt which might possibly

hail his immediate return to the Castle of Avenel. There will be a change ere they see me again, he thought to himself; I shall wear the coat of plate instead of the buff jerkin, and the steel morion for the bonnet and feather. They will be bold that may venture to break a gibe on the man-at-arms for the follies of the page; and I trust, that ere we return I shall have done something more worthy of note, than hallooing a hound after a deer, or scrambling a crag for a kite's nest. He could not, indeed, help marvelling that his grandmother, with all her religious prejudices, leaning it would seem to the other side, had consented so readily to his re-entering the service of the House of Avenel; and yet more, at the mysterious joy with which she took leave of him at the Abbey.

"Heaven," said the dame, as she kissed her young relation, and bade him farewell, "works its own work, even by the hands of those of our enemies who think themselves the strongest and the wisest. Thou,

my child, be ready to act upon the call of thy religion and country; and remember, each earthly bond which thou canst form is, compared to the ties which bind thee to them, like the loose flax to the twisted cable. Thou hast not forget the face or form of the damsel, Catherine Seyton?"

Roland would have replied in the negative, but the word seemed to stick in his throat, and Magdalen continued her exhortations.

"Thou must not forget her, my son; and here I entrust thee with a token, which I trust thou wilt speedily find an opportunity of delivering with care and secrecy into her own hand."

She put here into Roland's hand a very small packet, of which she again enjoined him to take the strictest care, and to suffer it to be seen by no one save Catherine Seyton, who, she again (unnecessarily) reminded him, was the young maiden he had met on the preceding day. She then be-

stowed on him her solemn benediction, and bade God speed him.

There was something in her manner and her conduct which implied mystery; but Roland Græme was not of an age or temper to waste much time in endeavouring to decypher her meaning. All that was obvious to his perception in the present journey, promised pleasure and novelty. He rejoiced that he was travelling towards Edinburgh, in order to assume the character of a man, and lay aside that of a boy. He was delighted to think that he would have an opportunity of rejoining Catherine Seyton, whose bright eyes and lively manners had made so favourable an impression on his imagination; and, as an inexperienced, yet high-spirited youth, entering for the first time upon active life, his heart bounded at the thought, that he was about to see all those scenes of courtly splendour and warlike adventures, of which the followers of Sir Halbert used to boast on their occa-

sional visits to Avenel, to the wonderment and envy of those who, like Roland, knew courts and camps only by hearsay, and were condemned to the solitary sports and almost monastic seclusion of Avenel, surrounded by its lonely lake, and embosomed among its pathless mountains. They shall mention my name, he said to himself, if the risk of my life can purchase me opportunities of distinction, and Catherine Seyton's saucy eye shall rest with more respect on the distinguished soldier, than that with which she laughed to scorn the raw and inexperienced page.—There was wanting but one accessary to complete the sense of rapturous excitation, and he possessed it by being once more mounted on the back of a fiery and active horse, instead of plodding along on foot, as had been the case during the preceding days.

Impelled by the liveliness of his own spirits, which so many circumstances tended naturally to exalt, Roland Græme's voice and his laughter were soon distinguished

amid the trampling of the horses of the retinue, and more than once attracted the attention of their leader, who remarked with satisfaction, that the youth replied with good-humoured raillery to such of the train as jested with him on his dismissal and return to the service of the House of Avenel.

"I thought the holly branch in your bonnet had been blighted, Master Roland?" said one of the men-at-arms.

"Only pinched with half an hour's frost; you see it flourishes as green as ever."

"It is too grave a plant to flourish on so hot a soil as that head-piece of thine, Master Roland Græme," retorted the other, who was an old equerry of Sir Halbert Glendinning.

"If it will not flourish alone," said Roland, "I will mix it with the laurel and the myrtle—and I will carry them so near the sky, that it shall make amends for their stinted growth."

Thus speaking, he dashed his spurs into his horse's sides, and, checking him at the same time, compelled him to execute a lofty

caracole. Sir Halbert Glendinning looked at the demeanour of his new attendant with that sort of melancholy pleasure with which those who have long followed the pursuits of life, and are sensible of their vanity, regard the gay, young, and buoyant spirits, to whom life, as yet, is only hope and promise.

In the meanwhile, Adam Woodcock, the falconer, stripped of his masquing habit, and attired, according to his rank and calling, in a green jerkin, with a bag on the one side, and a short hanger on the other, a glove on his left hand which reached half way up his arm, and a bonnet and feather upon his head, came after the party as fast as his active little galloway-nag could trot, and immediately entered into parley with Roland Græme.

"So, my youngster, you are once more under shadow of the holly branch?"

"And in case to repay you, my good friend," answered Roland, "your ten groats of silver."

"Which, but an hour since," said the falconer, "you had nearly paid me with ten inches of steel. On my faith, it is written in the book of our destiny, that I must brook your dagger, after all."

"Nay, speak not of that, my good friend," said the youth, "I would rather have broached my own bosom than yours; but who could have known you in the mumming dress you wore?"

"Yes," the falconer resumed,—for both as a poet and actor he had his own professional share of self-conceit,—"I think I was as good an Howleglas as ever played part at a Shrovetide revelry, and not a much worse Abbot of Unreason. I defy the Old Enemy to unmask me when I chuse to keep my vizard on. What the devil brought the Knight on us before we had the game out? You would have heard me hollo my own new ballad with a voice should have reached to Berwick. But, I pray you, Master Roland, be less free of cold steel on slight occasions; for, but for the stuffing of my

reverend doublet, I had only left the kirk to take my place in the kirk-yard."

"Nay, spare me that feud," said Roland Græme, "we shall have no time to fight it out; for, by our lord's command, I am bound for Edinburgh."

"I know it," said Adam Woodcock, "and even therefore we shall have time to solder up this rent by the way, for Sir Halbert has appointed me your companion and guide.'

"Ay; and with what purpose?" said the page.

"That," said the falconer, "is a question I cannot answer; but I know, that be the food of the eyasses washed or unwashed, and, indeed, whatsoever becomes of perch and mew, I am to go with you to Edinburgh, and see you safely delivered to the Regent at Holyrood."

"How, to the Regent?" said Roland, in surprise.

"Ay, by my faith, to the Regent," replied Woodcock; "I promise you, that if

you are not to enter his service, at least you are to wait upon him in the character of a retainer of our Knight of Avenel."

"I know no right," said the youth, "which the Knight of Avenel hath to transfer my service, supposing that I owe it to himself."

"Hush, hush!" said the falconer; "that is a question I advise no one to stir in until he has the mountain or the lake, or the march of another kingdom, which is better than either, betwixt him and his feudal superior."

"But Sir Halbert Glendinning," said the youth, "is not my feudal superior; nor has he aught of authority——"

"I pray you, my son, to rein your tongue," answered Adam Woodcock; "my lord's displeasure, if you provoke it, will be worse to appease than my lady's. The touch of his least finger were heavier than her hardest blow. And, by my faith, he is a man of steel, as true and as pure, but as hard and as pitiless. You remember the

Cock of Capperlawe, whom he hanged over his gate for a mere mistake—a poor yoke of oxen taken in Scotland, when he thought he was taking them in English land. I loved the Cock of Capperlaw ; the Kerrs had not an honester man in their clan, and they have had men that might have been a pattern to the Border—men that would not have lifted under twenty cows at once, and would have held themselves dishonoured if they had taken a drift of sheep, or the like, but always managed their raids in full credit and honour.—But see, his worship halts, and we are close by the bridge. Ride up —ride up—we must have his last instructions."

It was as Adam Woodcock said. In the hollow way descending towards the bridge, which was still in the guardianship of Peter Bridgeward, as he was called, though he was now very old, Sir Halbert Glendinning halted his retinue, and beckoned to Woodcock and Græme to advance to the head of the train.

"Woodcock," said he, "thou knowest to whom thou art to conduct this youth. And thou, young man, obey discreetly, and with diligence, the orders that shall be given thee. Curb thy vain and peevish temper. Be just, true, and faithful, and there is in thee that which may raise thee many a degree above thy present station. Neither shalt thou—always supposing thine efforts to be fair and honest—want the protection and countenance of Avenel."

Leaving them in front of the bridge, whose centre tower now began to cast a prolonged shade upon the river, the Knight of Avenel turned to the left, without crossing the river, and pursued his way towards the chain of hills within whose recesses are situated the Lake and Castle of Avenel. There remained behind, the falconer, Roland Græme, and a domestic of the Knight, of inferior rank, who was left with them to look after their horses while on the road, to carry their baggage, and to attend to their convenience.

So soon as the more numerous body of riders had turned off to pursue their journey westward, those whose route lay across the river, and was directed towards the North, summoned the Bridgeward, and demanded a free passage.

"I will not lower the bridge," answered Peter, in a voice querulous with age and ill-humour. "Come Papist, come Protestant, ye are all the same. The Papist threatened us with purgatory, and fleeched us with pardons;—the Protestant mints at us with the sword, and cuittles us with the liberty of conscience; but the never a one of either says 'Peter, there is your penny.' I am well tired of all this, and for no man shall the bridge fall that pays me not ready money; and I would have you know I care as little for Geneva as for Rome—as little for homilies as for pardons; and the silver pennies are the only passports I will hear of."

"Here is a proper old chuff," said Wood-

cock to his companion; then raising his voice, he exclaimed, "Hark thee, dog—Bridgeward, villain, doest thou think we have refused Peter's pence to Rome, to pay thine at the Bridge of Kennaquhair? Let thy bridge down instantly to the followers of the house of Avenel, or, by the hand of my father, and that handled many a bridle rein, for he was a bluff Yorkshire-man—I say, by my father's hand, our Knight will blow thee out of thy solan-goose's nest there in the middle of the water, with the light falconet which we are bringing southward from Edinburgh to-morrow."

The Bridgeward heard, and muttered, "A plague on falcon and falconet, on cannon and demi-cannon, and all the barking bull-dogs whom they halloo against stone and lime in these our days! It was a merry time when there was little besides handy blows, and it may be a flight of arrows that harmed an ashler wall as little as so many hail-stones. But we must jowk, and

let the jaw gang by." Comforting himself in his state of diminished consequence with this pithy old proverb, Peter Bridgeward lowered the drawbridge, and permitted them to pass over. At the sight of his white hair, albeit it discovered a visage equally peevish through age and misfortune, Roland was inclined to give him an alms, but Adam Woodcock withheld him. "E'en let him pay the penalty of his former churlishness and greed," he said; "the wolf, when he has lost his teeth, should be treated no better than a cur."

Leaving the Bridgeward to lament the alteration of times, which sent domineering soldiers, and feudal retainers, to his place of passage, instead of peaceful pilgrims, and reduced him to become the oppressed, instead of playing the extortioner, the travellers turned them northward; and Adam Woodcock, well acquainted with that part of the country, proposed to cut short a considerable portion of the road, by traver-

sing the little vale of Glendearg, so famous for the adventures which befel therein during the earlier part of the Benedictine's manuscript. With these, and with the thousand commentaries, representations, and misrepresentations, to which they had given rise, Roland Græme was, of course, well acquainted; for in the Castle of Avenel, as well as in other great establishments, the inmates talked of nothing so often, or with such pleasure, as of the private affairs of their lord and lady. But while Roland was viewing with interest these haunted scenes, in which things were said to have passed beyond the ordinary laws of nature, Adam Woodcock was still regretting in his secret soul the unfinished revel and the unsung ballad, and kept every now and then breaking out with some such verses as these:—

"The Friars of Fail drank berry-brown ale,
The best that ere was tasted;
The Monks of Melrose made gude kale
On Fridays, when they fasted.

"Saint Monance' sister,
The grey priest kist her—
Fiend save the company!
Sing hey trix,
Trim go trix,
Under the greenwood tree."

"By my hand, friend Woodcock," said the page, "though I know you for a hardy gospeller, that fear neither saint nor devil, yet, if I were you, I would not sing your profane songs in this valley of Glendearg, considering what has happened here before our time."

"A straw for your wandering spirits," said Adam Woodcock; "I mind them no more than an earn cares for a string of wild geese—they have all fled since the pulpits were filled with honest men, and the people's ears with sound doctrine. Nay, I have a touch at them in my ballad, an I had but had the good luck to have it sung to end;" and again he set off in the same key.

"From haunted spring and grassy ring,
Troop goblin, elf, and fairy;

And the kelpie must flit from the black bog-pit,
And the brownie must not tarry;
To Limbo-lake,
Their way they take,
With scarce the pith to flee.
Sing hey trix,
Trim go trix,
Under the greenwood tree.

I think," he added, "that could Sir Halbert's patience have stretched till we came that length, he would have had a hearty laugh, and that is what he seldom enjoys."

"If it be all true that men tell of his early life," said Roland, "he has less right to laugh at goblins than most men."

"Ay, *if* it be all true," answered Adam Woodcock; "but who can insure us of that? Moreover, these were but tales the monks used to gull us simple laymen withal; they knew that fairies and hobgoblins brought aves and paternosters into repute; but now, we have given up worship of images in wood and stone, methinks it were no time to be afraid of bubbles in the water, or shadows in the air."

"But," said Roland Græme, "as the Catholics say they do not worship wood or stone, but only as emblems of the holy saints, and not as things holy in themselves——"

"Pshaw! pshaw!" answered the falconer; "a rush for their prating. They told us another story when these baptized idols of theirs brought pike-staves and sandalled shoon from all the four winds, and whillied the old women out of their corn and their candle-ends, and their butter, bacon, wool, and cheese, and when not so much as a grey groat escaped tything."

Roland Græme had been long taught, by necessity, to consider his form of religion as a profound secret, and to say nothing whatsoever in its defence when assailed, lest he should draw on himself the suspicion of belonging to the unpopular and exploded church. He therefore suffered Adam Woodcock to triumph without farther opposition, marvelling in his own mind whether any of the goblins, formerly such active agents,

would avenge his rude raillery before they left the valley of Glendearg. But no such consequences followed. They passed the night quietly in a cottage in the glen, and the next day resumed their route to Edinburgh.

CHAPTER II.

Edina! Scotia's darling seat,
All hail thy palaces and towers,
Where once, beneath a monarch's feet,
Sate legislation's sovereign powers.
BURNS.

"This then, is Edinburgh?" said the youth, as the fellow-travellers arrived at one of the heights to the southward, which commanded a view of the great northern capital—"This is that Edinburgh of which we have heard so much?"

"Even so," said the falconer; "yonder stands Auld Reekie—you may see the smoke hover over her at twenty miles distance, as the goss-hawk hangs over a plump of young wild-ducks—ay, yonder is the

heart of Scotland, and each throb that she gives is felt from the edge of Solway to Duncan's-bay-head. See, yonder is the old Castle; and see to the right, on yon rising ground, that is the castle of Craigmillar, which I have known a merry place in my time."

"Was it not there," said the page in a low voice, "that the Queen held her court?"

"Ay, ay," replied the falconer, "Queen she was then, though you must not call her so now—well, they may say what they will—many a true heart will be sad for Mary Stuart, e'en if all be true men say of her; for look you, Master Roland—she was the loveliest creature to look upon that I ever saw with eye, and no lady in the land liked better the fair flight of a falcon. I was at the great match on Roslin-moor betwixt Bothwell—he was a black sight to her that Bothwell—and the Baron of Roslin, who could judge a hawk's flight as well as any man in Scotland—a butt of Rhenish

and a ring of gold was the wager, and it was flown as fairly for as ever was red gold and bright wine. And to see her there on her white palfrey, that flew as if it scorned to touch more than the heather blossom; and to hear her voice, as clear and sweet as the mavis's whistle, mix among our jolly whooping and whistling, and to mark all the nobles dashing round her; happiest he who got a word or look—tearing through moss and hagg, and venturing neck and limb to gain the praise of a bold rider, and the blink of a bonnie Queen's bright eye—she will see little hawking where she lies now—ay, ay, pomp and pleasure pass away as speedily as the wap of a falcon's wing."

"And where is this poor Queen now confined?" said Roland Græme, interested in the fate of a woman, whose beauty and grace had made so strong an impression even on the blunt and careless character of Adam Woodcock.

"Where is she now imprisoned?" said Adam Woodcock; "why, in some castle in

the north, they say—I know not where, for my part, nor is it worth while to vex one's self anent what cannot be mended—An she had guided her power well whilst she had it, she had not come to so evil a pass. Men say she must resign her crown to this little baby of a prince, for that they will trust her with it no longer. Our master has been as busy as his neighbours in all this work. If the Queen should come to her own again, Avenel Castle is like to smoke for it, unless he makes his bargain all the better."

"In a castle in the north Queen Mary is confined?" said the page.

"Why, ay—they say so at least—In a castle beyond that great river which comes down yonder, and looks like a river, but it is a branch of the sea, and as bitter as brine."

"And amongst all her subjects," said the page, with some emotion, "is there none that will adventure any thing for her relief?"

"That is a kittle question," said the falconer; "and if you ask it often, Master

Roland, I am fain to tell you that you will be mewed up yourself in some of those castles, if they do not prefer twisting your head off, to save farther trouble with you—Adventure any thing? Lord, why, Murray has the wind in his poop now, man, and flies so high and strong, that the devil a wing of them can match him—No, no, there she is, and there she must lie, till Heaven send her deliverance, or till her son has the management of all—But Murray will never let her loose again, he knows her too well.—And hark thee, we are now bound for Holyrood, where thou wilt find plenty of news and of courtiers to tell it—But, take my counsel, and keep a calm sough, as the Scots say—hear every man's counsel, and keep your own. And if you hap to learn any news you like, leap not up as if you were to put on armour direct in the cause—Our old Mr Wingate says—and he knows court-cattle well—that if you are told old King Coul is come alive again, you should turn it off with 'And is he, in truth?

—I heard not of it,' and should seem no more moved, than if one told you, by way of novelty, that old King Coul was dead and buried. Wherefore, look well to your bearing, Master Roland, for, I promise you, you come among a generation that are keen as a hungry hawk—And never be dagger out of sheath at every wry word you hear spoken; for you will find as hot blades as yourself, and then will be letting of blood without advice either of leech or almanack."

"You shall see how staid I will be, and how cautious, my good friend," said Græme; "but, blessed Lady, what goodly house is that which is lying all in ruins so close to the city? Have they been playing at the Abbot of Unreason here, and ended the gambol by burning the church?"

"There again now," replied his companion, "you go down the wind like a wild haggard, that minds neither lure nor beck —that is a question you should have asked in as low a tone as I shall answer it."

"If I stay here long," said Roland

Græme, "it is like I shall lose the natural use of my voice—but what are the ruins then?"

"The Kirk of Field," said the falconer, in a low and impressive whisper, laying at the same time his finger on his lip, "ask no more about it—somebody got foul play, and somebody got the blame of it; and the game began there which perhaps may not be played out in our time.—Poor Henry Darnley! to be an ass, he understood somewhat of a hawk; but they sent him on the wing through the air himself one bright moonlight night."

The memory of this catastrophe was so recent, that the page averted his eyes with horror from the scathed ruins in which it had taken place; and the accusations against the Queen, to which it had given rise, came over his mind with such strength as to balance the compassion he had begun to entertain for her present forlorn situation.

It was, indeed, with that agitating state

of mind which arises partly from horror, but more from eager interest and curiosity, that young Græme found himself actually traversing the scene of those tremendous events, the report of which had disturbed the most distant solitudes in Scotland, like the echoes of distant thunder rolling among the mountains.

Now, he thought, now or never shall I become a man, and bear my part in those deeds which the simple inhabitants of our hamlets repeat to each other as if they were wrought by beings of a superior race to their own. I will know now, wherefore the Knight of Avenel carries his crest so much above those of the neighbouring baronage, and how it is that men, by valour and wisdom, work their way from the hoddin gray coat to the cloak of scarlet and gold. Men say I have not much wisdom to recommend me; and if that be true, courage must do it, for I will be a man amongst living men, or a dead corpse amongst the dead.

From these plans of ambition he turned

his thoughts to those of pleasure, and began to form many conjectures when and where he should see Catherine Seyton, and in what manner their acquaintance was to be renewed. With such conjectures he was amusing himself, when he found that they had entered the city, and all other feelings were suspended in the sensation of giddy astonishment with which the inhabitant of a solitary country is affected, when, for the first time, he finds himself in the streets of a large and populous city, a unit in the midst of thousands.

The principal street of Edinburgh was then, as now, one of the most spacious in Europe. The extreme height of the houses, and the variety of Gothic gables and battlements, and balconies, by which the sky-line on each side was crowned and terminated, together with the width of the street itself, might have struck with surprise a more practised eye than that of young Græme. The population, close packed within the walls of the city, and at this time

increased by the number of the lords of the King's party who had thronged to Edinburgh to wait upon the Regent Murray, absolutely swarmed like bees on the wide and stately street. Instead of the shop-windows, which are now calculated for the display of goods, the traders had their open booths projecting on the street, in which, as in the fashion of the modern bazaars, all was exposed which they had upon sale. And though the commodities were not of the richest kinds, yet Græme seemed to see the wealth of the whole world in the various bales of Flanders cloths, and the specimens of tapestry; and, at other places, the display of domestic utensils, and pieces of silver-plate, struck him with wonder. The sight of cutlers' booths, furnished with swords and poniards, which were manufactured in Scotland, and with pieces of defensive armour, imported from Flanders, added to his surprise; and, at every step, he found so much to admire and to gaze upon, that Adam Woodcock had no little difficulty in pre-

vailing on him to advance through such a scene of enchantment.

The sight of the crowds which filled the streets was equally a subject of wonder. Here a gay lady, in her muffler, or silken veil, traced her way delicately, a gentleman usher making way for her, a page bearing up her train, and a waiting gentlewoman carrying her Bible, and intimating that her purpose was towards the church—There he might see a groupe of citizens bending the same way, with their short Flemish cloaks, wide trowsers, and high-caped doublets, a fashion to which, as well as to their bonnet and feather, the Scots were long faithful. Then, again, came the clergyman himself, in his black Geneva cloak and band, lending a grave and attentive ear to the discourse of several persons who accompanied him, and who were doubtless holding serious converse on the religious subject he was about to treat of. Nor did there lack passengers of a different class and appearance.

At every turn, Roland Græme might see a gallant ruffle along in the newer or French mode, his doublet slashed, and his points of the same colours with the lining, his long sword on one side, and his poniard on the other, behind him a body of stout serving-men, proportioned to his estate and quality, all of whom walked with the air of military retainers, and were armed with sword and buckler, the latter being a small round shield, not unlike the Highland target, having a steel spike in the centre. Two of these parties, each headed by a person of importance, chanced to meet in the very centre of the street, or, as it was called, "the crown of the causeway," a post of honour as tenaciously asserted in Scotland, as that of giving or taking the wall used to be in the more southern part of the island. The two leaders being of equal rank, and, most probably, either animated by political dislike, or by recollection of some feudal enmity, marched close up to each other, without yielding an inch to the right

or the left; and neither shewing the least purpose of giving way, they stopped for an instant, and then drew their swords. Their followers imitated their example; about a score of weapons at once flashed in the sun, and there was an immediate clatter of swords and bucklers, while the followers on either side cried their master's name; the one shouting "Help, a Leslie! a Leslie!" While the others answered with shouts of "Seyton! Seyton!" with the additional punning slogan, "Set on, set on—bear the knaves to the ground."

If the falconer found difficulty in getting the page to go forward before, it was now perfectly impossible. He reined up his horse, clapped his hands, and, delighted with the fray, cried and shouted as fast as any of those that were actually engaged in it.

The noise and cries thus arising on the High Gait, as it was called, drew into the quarrel two or three other parties of gentlemen and their servants, besides some single passengers, who, hearing a fray betwixt these

two distinguished names, took part in it, either for love or hatred.

The combat became now very sharp, and although the sword-and-buckler-men made more clatter and noise than they did real damage, yet several good cuts were dealt among them; and those who wore rapiers, a more formidable weapon than the ordinary Scottish sword, gave and received dangerous wounds. Two men were already stretched on the causeway, and the party of Seyton began to give ground, being much inferior in number to the other, with which several of the citizens had united themselves, when young Roland Græme, beholding their leader, a noble gentleman, fighting bravely, and hard pressed with numbers, could withhold no longer. "Adam Woodcock," he said, "an you be a man, draw, and let us take part with the Seyton." And, without waiting a reply, or listening to the falconer's earnest entreaty, that he would leave alone a strife in which he had no concern, the fiery youth sprung from his horse, drew his short sword,

and shouting like the rest, "A Seyton! a Seyton! Set on! Set on!" thrust forward into the throng, and struck down one of those who was pressing hardest upon the gentleman whose cause he espoused. This sudden reinforcement gave spirit to the weaker party, who began to renew the combat with much spirit, when four of the magistrates of the city, distinguished by their velvet cloaks and gold chains, came up with a guard of halberdiers and citizens, armed with long weapons, who, well accustomed to such service, thrust boldly forward, and compelled the swordsmen to separate, who immediately retreated in different directions, leaving such of the wounded on both sides, as had been disabled in the fray, lying on the street.

The falconer, who had been tearing his beard for anger at his comrade's rashness, now rode up to him with the horse which he had caught by the bridle, and accosted him with "Master Roland—master goose—master madcap—will it please you to get on horse and budge? or will you re-

main here to be carried to prison, and made to answer for this pretty day's work?"

The page, who had begun his retreat along with the Seytons, just as if he had been one of their natural allies, was by this unceremonious application made sensible that he was acting a foolish part; and, obeying Adam Woodcock, with some sense of shame, he sprung actively on horseback, and upsetting with the shoulder of the animal a city-officer, who was making towards him, he began to ride smartly down the street, along with his companion, and was quickly out of the reach of the hue and cry. In fact, rencounters of the kind were so common in Edinburgh at this period, that the disturbance seldom excited much attention after the affray was over, unless some person of consequence chanced to have fallen, an accident which imposed on his friends the duty of avenging his death upon the first convenient opportunity. So feeble, indeed, was the arm of the police, that it was not unusual for such skirmishes to last for hours, where the par-

ties were numerous and well matched. But at this time the Regent, a man of great strength of character, aware of the mischief which usually arose from such acts of violence, had prevailed with the magistrates to keep a constant guard on foot, for preventing or separating such affrays as had happened in the present case.

The falconer and his young companion were now riding down the Canongate, and had slackened their pace to avoid attracting attention, the rather that there seemed to be no appearance of pursuit. Roland hung his head as one who was conscious his conduct had been none of the wisest, while his companion thus addressed him.

"Will you be pleased to tell me one thing, Master Roland Græme, and that is, whether there be a devil incarnate in you or no?"

"Truly, Master Adam Woodcock," answered the page, "I would fain hope there is not."

"Then," said Adam, "I would fain know

by what other influence or instigation you are perpetually at one end or the other of some bloody brawl? What, I pray, had you to do with these Seytons and Leslies, that you never heard the names of in your life before?"

"You are out there, my friend," said Roland Græme, "I have my own reasons for being a friend to the Seytons."

"They must have been very secret reasons then," answered Adam Woodcock, "for I think I could have wagered, you had never known one of the name; and I am apt to believe still, that it was rather your unhallowed passion for that clashing of cold iron, which has as much charm for you as the clatter of a brass pan hath for a hive of bees, more than any care either for Seyton or for Leslie, that persuaded you to thrust your fool's head into a quarrel that no ways concerned you. But take this for a warning, my young master, that if you are to draw sword with every man who draws sword on the High-gait here, it will be scarce

worth your while to sheathe bilbo again for the rest of your life, since, if I guess rightly, it will scarce endure on such terms for many hours—all which I leave to your serious consideration."

"By my word, Adam, I honour your advice; and I promise you, that I will practise by it as faithfully as if I were sworn apprentice to you, to the trade and mystery of bearing myself with all wisdom and safety through the new paths of life that I am about to be engaged in."

"And therein you will do well," said the falconer; "and I do not quarrel with you, Master Roland, for having a grain over much spirit, because I know one may bring to the hand a wild hawk which one never can a dunghill hen—and so betwixt two faults you have the best side on't. But besides your peculiar genius for quarrelling and lugging out your side companion, my dear Master Roland, you have also the gift of peering under every woman's muffler and screen, as if you expected to find an old acquaintance. Though were you to spy one,

I should be as much surprised at it, well wotting how few you have seen of these same wild-fowl, as I was at your taking so deep an interest even now in the Seyton."

"Tush, man! nonsense and folly," answered Roland Græme, "I but sought to see what eyes these gentle hawks have got under their hood."

"Ay, but it's a dangerous subject of inquiry," said the falconer; "you had better hold out your bare wrist for an eagle to perch upon.—Look you, Master Roland, these pretty wild-geese cannot be hawked at without risk—they have as many divings, boltings, and volleyings, as the most gamesome quarry that falcon ever flew at—And besides, every woman of them is manned with her husband, or her kind friend, or her brother, or her cousin, or her sworn servant at the least—But you heed me not, Master Roland, though I know the game so well—your eye is all on that pretty damsel who trips down the gait before us—by my certes, I will warrant her a blithe dancer either in reel or revel—a pair of silver

morisco bells would become these pretty ancles as well as the jesses would suit the fairest Norway hawk."

"Thou art a fool, Adam," said the page, "and I care not a button about the girl or her ancles—But what, the foul fiend, one must look at something!"

"Very true, Master Roland Græme," said his guide, "but let me pray you to chuse your objects better. Look you, there is scarce a woman walks this High-gait with a silk screen or a pearlin muffler, but, as I said before, she has either gentleman-usher before her, or kinsman, or lover, or husband at her elbow, or it may be a brace of stout fellows with sword and buckler, not so far behind but what they can follow close—But you heed me no more than a goss-hawk minds a yellow yoldring.

"O yes, I do—I do mind you indeed," said Roland Græme; "but hold my nag a bit—I will be with you in the exchange of a whistle." So saying, and ere Adam Woodcock could finish the sermon which was dy-

ing on his tongue, Roland Græme, to the falconer's utter astonishment, threw him the bridle of his jennet, jumped off horseback, and pursued down one of the closes or narrow lanes, which, opening under a vault, terminate upon the main street, the very maiden to whom his friend had accused him of shewing so much attention, and who had turned down the pass in question.

"Saint Mary, Saint Magdalen, Saint Benedict, Saint Barnabas!" said the poor falconer, when he found himself thus suddenly brought to a pause in the midst of the Canongate, and saw his young charge start off like a madman in quest of a damsel whom he had never, as Adam supposed, seen in his life before,—"Saint Satan and Saint Beelzebub—for this would make one swear Saint and devil—what can have come over the lad, with a wanion!—And what shall I do the whilst—he will have his throat cut, the poor lad, as sure as I was born at the foot of Roseberry-Topping. Could I find some one to hold the

horses! but they are as sharp here northaway as in canny Yorkshire herself, and quit bridle, quit titt, as we say. An' I could but see one of our folks now, a holly sprig were worth a gold tassel; or could I but see one of the Regent's men—but to leave the horses to a stranger, that I cannot—and to leave the place while the lad is in jeopardy, that I wonot."

We must leave the falconer, however, in the midst of his distress, and follow the hot-headed youth who was the cause of his perplexity.

The latter part of Adam Woodcock's sage remonstrance had been in a great measure lost upon Roland, for whose benefit it was intended; because, in one of the female forms which tripped along the street, muffled in a veil of striped silk, like the women of Brussels at this day, his eye had discerned something which closely resembled the exquisite shape and spirited bearing of Catherine Seyton. During all the grave advice which the falconer was dinning into his ear, his eye continued intent upon so

interesting an object of observation; and, at length, as the damsel, just about to dive under one of the arched passages which afford outlet to the Canongate from the houses beneath, (a passage, graced bya projecting shield of arms, supported by two huge foxes of stone,) had lifted her veil, for the purpose perhaps of descrying who the horseman was who for some time had eyed her so closely, young Roland saw, under the shadow of the silken plaid, enough of the bright azure eyes, fair locks, and blithe features, to induce him, like an inexperienced and rash madcap, whose wilful ways had never been traversed by contradiction, nor much subjected to consideration, to throw the bridle of his horse into Adam Woodcock's hand, and leave him to play the waiting gentleman, while he dashed down the paved court after Catherine Seyton—all as aforesaid.

Women's wits are proverbially quick, but apparently those of Catherine suggested no better expedient than fairly to betake her-

self to speed of foot, in hopes of baffling the page's vivacity, by getting safely lodged before he could discover where. But a youth of eighteen, in pursuit of a mistress, is not so easily outstripped. Catherine fled across a paved court, decorated with large formal vases of stone, in which yews, cypresses, and other evergreens, vegetated in sombre sullenness, and gave a correspondent degree of solemnity to the high and heavy building in front of which they were placed as ornaments, aspiring towards a square portion of the blue hemisphere, corresponding exactly in extent to the quadrangle in which they were stationed, and all around which rose huge black walls, exhibiting windows in rows of five stories, with heavy architraves over each, bearing armorial and religious devices.

Through this court Catherine Seyton flashed like a hunted doe, making the best use of those pretty legs which had attracted the commendation even of the reflective and cautious Adam Woodcock. She hast

ened towards a large door in the centre of the lower front of the court, pulled the bobbin till the latch flew up, and ensconced herself in the ancient mansion. But, if she fled like a doe, Roland Græme followed with the speed and ardour of a youthful stag-hound, loosed, for the first time, on his prey. He kept her in view, in spite of her efforts; for it is remarkable, what an advantage in such a race the gallant who desires to see, possesses over the maiden who wishes not to be seen—an advantage which I have known counterbalance a great start in point of distance. In short, he saw the waving of her screen, or veil, at one corner, heard the tap of her foot, light as that was, as it crossed the court, and caught a glimpse of her figure just as she entered the door of the mansion.

Roland Græme, inconsiderate and headlong as we have described him, having no knowledge of real life but from the romances which he had read, and not an idea of checking himself in the midst of any eager

impulse; possessed, besides, of much courage and readiness, never hesitated for a moment to approach the door through which the object of his search had disappeared. He, too, pulled the bobbin, and the latch, though heavy and massive, answered to the summons, and arose. The page entered with the same precipitation which had marked his whole proceeding, and found himself in a large gloomy hall, or vestibule, dimly enlightened by latticed casements of painted glass, and rendered yet dimmer through the exclusion of the sunbeams, owing to the height of the walls of those buildings by which the court-yard was enclosed. The walls of the hall were surrounded with suits of ancient and rusted armour, interchanged with huge and massive stone scutcheons, bearing double tressures fleured and counter-fleured, wheat-sheaves, coronets, and so forth, things to which Roland Græme gave not a moment's attention.

In fact, he only deigned to observe the

figure of Catherine Seyton, who, deeming herself safe in the hall, had stopped to take breath after her course, and was reposing herself for a moment on a large oaken settle which stood at the upper end of the hall. The noise of Roland's entrance at once disturbed her; she started up with a faint scream of surprise, and escaped through one of the several folding-doors which opened into this apartment as a common centre. This door, which Roland Græme instantly approached, opened on a large and well-lighted gallery, at the upper end of which he could hear several voices, and the noise of hasty steps approaching toward the hall or vestibule. A little recalled to sober thought by an appearance of serious danger, he was deliberating whether he should stand fast or retire, when Catherine Seyton re-entered from a side-door, running towards him with as much speed as a few minutes since she had fled from him.

"O, what mischief brought you hither?"

she said; "fly—fly, or you are a dead man, —or, stay—they come—flight is impossible—say you came to ask after Lord Seyton."

She sprung from him, and disappeared through the door by which she had made her second appearance; and, at the same instant, a pair of large folding-doors at the upper end of the gallery flew open with vehemence, and six or seven young gentlemen, richly dressed, pressed forward into the apartment, having, for the greater part, their swords drawn.

"Who is it," said one, "dare intrude on us in our own mansion?"

"Cut him to pieces," said another; "let him pay for this day's insolence and violence—he is some follower of the Rothes."

"No, by Saint Mary," said another, "he is a follower of the arch-fiend and ennobled clown Halbert Glendinning, who takes the style of Avenel—once a church-vassal, now a pillager of the church."

"It is so," said a fourth; "I know him

by the holly-sprig, which is their cognisance. Secure the door, he must answer for this insolence."

Two of the gallants, hastily drawing their weapons, past on to the door by which Roland had entered the hall, and stationed themselves there as if to prevent his escape. The others advanced on Græme, who had just sense enough to perceive that any attempt at resistance would be alike fruitless and imprudent. At once, and by various voices, none of which sounded amicably, the page was required to say who he was, whence he came, his name, his errand, and who sent him hither. The number of the questions demanded of him at once, afforded a momentary apology for his remaining silent, and ere that brief truce had elapsed, a personage entered the hall, at whose appearance those who had gathered fiercely around Roland, fell back with respect.

This was a tall man, whose dark hair was already grizzled, though his eye and haughty features retained all the animation of

youth. The upper part of his person was undressed to his Holland shirt, whose ample folds were stained with blood. But he wore a mantle of crimson, lined with rich fur cast around him, which supplied the deficiency of his dress. On his head he had a crimson velvet bonnet, looped up on one side with a small golden chain of many links, which, going thrice round the hat, was fastened by a medal agreeable to the fashion amongst the grandees of the time.

"Whom have you here, sons and kinsmen," said he, "around whom you crowd thus roughly?—Know you not that the shelter of this roof should secure every one fair treatment, who shall come hither either in fair peace, or in open and manly hostility?"

"But here, my lord," answered one of the youths, "is a knave who comes on treacherous espial!"

"I deny the charge!" said Roland Græme boldly, "I came to inquire after my Lord Seyton."

"A likely tale," answered his accusers,

" in the mouth of a follower of Glendinning."

" Stay, young men," said the Lord Seyton, for it was that nobleman himself, " let me look at this youth—by heaven, it is the very same who came so boldly to my side not very many minutes since, when some of my own knaves bore themselves with more respect to their own worshipful safety than to mine! Stand back from him, for he well deserves honour and a friendly welcome at your hands, instead of this rough treatment."

They fell back on all sides, obedient to Lord Seyton's commands, who, taking Roland Græme by the hand, thanked him for his prompt and gallant assistance, adding, that he nothing doubted, " the same interest which he had taken in his cause in the affray, brought him hither to inquire after his hurt."

Roland bowed low in acquiescence.

" Or is there any thing in which I can serve you, to shew my sense of your ready gallantry."

But the page, thinking it best to abide by the apology for his visit which the Lord Seyton had so aptly himself suggested, replied, "that to be assured of his lordship's safety, had been the only cause of his intrusion. He judged," he added, "he had seen him receive some hurt in the affray."

"A trifle," said Lord Seyton; "I had but stripped my doublet, that the chirurgeon might put some dressing on the paltry scratch, when these rash boys interrupted us with their clamour."

Roland Græme, making a low obeisance, was now about to depart, for, relieved from the danger of being treated as a spy, he began next to fear, that his companion Adam Woodcock, whom he had so unceremoniously quitted, would either bring him into some farther dilemma, by venturing into the hotel in quest of him, or ride off and leave him behind altogether. But Lord Seyton did not permit him to escape so easily.—"Tarry," he said, "young man, and let me know thy rank and name. The Seyton has of late

been more wont to see friends and followers shrink from his side, than to receive aid from strangers—but a new world may come round, in which he may have the chance of rewarding his well-wishers."

"My name is Roland Græme, my lord," answered the youth, "a page, who, for the present, is in the service of Sir Halbert Glendinning."

"I said so from the first," said one of the young men; "my life I will wager, that this is a shaft out of the heretic's quiver—a stratagem from first to last, to injeer into your confidence some espial of his own. They know how to teach both boys and women to play the intelligencers."

"That is false, if it be spoken of me," said Roland; "no man in Scotland should teach me such a foul part!"

"I believe thee, boy," said Seyton, "for thy strokes were too fair to be dealt upon an understanding with those that were to receive them. Credit me, however, I little expected to have help at need from one of

your master's household; and I would know what moved thee in my quarrel, to thine own endangering?"

"So please you, my lord," said Roland, "I think my master himself would not have stood by, and seen an honourable man borne to earth by odds, if his single arm could help him. Such, at least, is the lesson we were taught in chivalry, at the Castle of Avenel."

"The good seed hath fallen into good ground, young man," said Seyton; "but alas! if thou practise such honourable war in these dishonourable days, when right is every where borne down by mastery, thy life, my poor boy, will be but a short one."

"Let it be short, so it be honourable," said Roland Græme; "and permit me now, my lord, to commend me to your grace, and to take my leave. A comrade waits with my horse in the street."

"Take this, however, young man," said Lord Seyton, undoing from his bonnet the

golden chain and medal, " and wear it for my sake."

With no little pride Roland Græme accepted the gift, which he hastily fastened around his bonnet, as he had seen gallants wear such an ornament, and renewing his obeisance to the Baron, left the hall, traversed the court, and appeared in the street, just as Adam Woodcock, vexed and anxious at his delay, had determined to leave the horses to their fate, and go in quest of his youthful comrade. " Whose barn hast thou broken next ?" he exclaimed, greatly relieved by his appearance, although his countenance indicated that he had passed through an agitating scene.

" Ask me no questions," said Roland, leaping gaily on his horse ; " but see how short time it takes to win a chain of gold," pointing to that which he now wore.

" Now, God forbid that thou hast either stolen it, or reft it by violence," said the falconer ; " for, otherwise, I wot not how

the devil thou couldst compass it. I have been often here, ay, for months at an end, and no one gave me either chain or medal."

"Thou seest I have got one on shorter acquaintance with the city," answered the page, "and set thine honest heart at rest; that which is fairly won and freely given, is neither reft nor stolen."

"Marry, hang thee, with thy fanfarona* about thy neck!" said the falconer; "I think water will not drown, nor hemp strangle thee. Thou hast been discarded as my lady's page, to come in again as my lord's squire; and for following a noble young damsel into some great household, thou getst a chain and a medal, where another would have had the baton across his shoulders, if he missed having the dirk in

* A name given to the gold chains worn by the military men of the period. It is of Spanish origin; for the fashion of wearing these costly ornaments was much followed amongst the conquerors of the New World.

his body.—But here we come in front of the old Abbey. Bear thy good luck with you when you cross these paved stones, and, by our Lady, you may brag Scotland."

As he spoke, they checked their horses, where the huge old vaulted entrance to the Abbey or Palace of Holyrood, crossed the termination of the street down which they had proceeded. The court-yard of the palace opened within this gloomy porch, shewing the front of an irregular pile of monastic buildings, one wing of which is still extant, forming a part of the modern palace, erected in the days of Charles I.

At the gate of the porch the falconer and page resigned their horses to the serving-man in attendance; the falconer commanding him, with an air of authority, to carry them safely to the stables. "We follow," he said, "the Knight of Avenel.—We must bear ourselves for what we are here," said he, in a whisper to Roland, "for every one here is looked on as they demean themselves; and he that is too modest must to

the wall, as the proverb says; therefore, cock thy bonnet, man, and let us brook the causeway bravely."

Assuming, therefore, an air of consequence, corresponding to what he supposed to be his master's importance and quality, Adam Woodcock led the way into the courtyard of the Palace of Holyrood.

CHAPTER III.

——The sky is clouded, Gaspard,
And the vex'd ocean sleeps a troubled sleep,
Beneath a lurid gleam of parting sunshine.
Such slumber hangs o'er discontented lands,
While factions doubt, as yet, if they have strength
To front the open battle.

Albion—A Poem.

The youthful page paused on the entrance of the court-yard, and implored his guide to give him a moment's breathing space. "Let me but look around me, man," said he; "you consider not I have never seen such a scene as this before.—And this is Holyrood—the resort of the gallant and gay, and the fair and the wise, and the powerful!"

"Ay, marry, is it!" said Woodcock; "but I wish I could hood thee as they do the hawks, for thou starest as wildly as if

you sought another fray or another fanfarona. I would I had thee safely housed, for thou lookest wild as a goss-hawk."

It was indeed no common sight to Roland, the vestibule of a palace, traversed by its various groupes,—some radiant with gaiety—some pensive, and apparently weighed down by affairs concerning the state, or concerning themselves. Here the hoary statesman, with his cautious yet commanding look, his furred cloak and sable pantoufles; there the soldier in buff and steel, his long sword jarring against the pavement, and his whiskered upper lip and frowning brow; there again passed my lord's serving-man, high of heart, and bloody of hand, humble to his master and his master's equals, insolent to all others. To these might be added, the poor suitor, with his anxious look and depressed mien—the officer, full of his brief authority, elbowing his betters, and possibly his benefactors, out of the road—the proud priest, who sought a better benefice—the proud baron, who sought a grant

of church lands—the robber chief, who came to solicit a pardon for the injuries he had inflicted on his neighbours—the plundered franklin, who came to seek vengeance for that which he had himself received. Besides, there was the mustering and disposition of guards and of soldiers—the dispatching of messengers, and the receiving them—the trampling and neighing of horses without the gate—the flashing of arms, and rustling of plumes, and jingling of spurs within it. In short, it was that gay and splendid confusion, in which the eye of youth sees all that is brave and brilliant, and that of experience much that is doubtful, deceitful, false, and hollow—hopes that will never be gratified—promises which will never be fulfilled—pride in the disguise of humility—and insolence in that of frank and generous bounty.

As, tired of the eager and enraptured attention which the page gave to a scene so new to him, Adam Woodcock endeavoured to get him to move forward, be-

fore his exuberance of astonishment should attract the observation of the sharp-witted denizens of the court, the falconer himself became an object of attention to a gay menial in a dark-green bonnet and feather, with a cloak of a corresponding colour, laid down, as the phrase then went, by six broad bars of silver lace, and welted with violet and silver. The words of recognition burst from both at once. "What! Adam Woodcock at court," and "What! Michael Wing-the-wind—and how runs the hackit greyhound bitch now?"

"The waur for the wear, like ourselves, Adam—eight years this grass—no four legs will carry a dog for ever; but we keep her for the breed, and so she 'scapes Borderdoom.—But why stand you gazing there? I promise you my lord has wished for you, and asked for you."

"My Lord of Murray asked for me, and he Regent of the kingdom too!" said Adam. "I hunger and thirst to pay my duty to my good lord;—but I fancy his good lordship remembers the day's sport on Carnwarth-

moor; and my Drummelzier falcon, that beat the hawks from the Isle of Man, and won his lordship a hundred crowns from the Southern baron whom they called Stanley."

"Nay, not to flatter thee, Adam," said his court-friend, "he remembers nought of thee, or of thy falcon either. He hath flown many a higher flight since that, and struck his quarry too. But come, come hither away; I trust we are to be good comrades on the old score."

"What!" said Adam, "you would have me crash a pot with you? but I must first dispose of my eyass, where he will neither have girl to chase, or lad to draw sword upon."

"Is the youngster such a one?" said Michael.

"Ay, by my hood, he flies at all game," replied Woodcock.

"Then had he better come with us," said Michael Wing-the-wind; "for we cannot have a proper carouse just now, only I would wet my lips, and so must you. I want

to hear the news from Saint Mary's before you see my lord, and I will let you know how the wind sits up yonder."

While he thus spoke, he led the way to a side door which opened into the court; and threading several dark passages with the air of one who knew the most secret recesses of the palace, conducted them to a small matted chamber, where he placed bread and cheese, and a foaming flagon of ale before the falconer, who immediately did justice to the latter in a hearty draught, which nearly emptied the measure. Having drawn his breath, and dashed the froth from his whiskers, he observed, that his anxiety for the boy had made him deadly dry.

"Mend your draught," said his hospitable friend, again supplying the flagon from a pitcher which stood beside. "I know the way to the buttery-bar. And now, mind what I say—this morning the Earl of Morton came to my lord in a mighty chafe."

"What! they keep the old friendship then?" said Woodcock.

"Ay, ay, man, what else?" said Michael; "one hand must scratch the other. But in a mighty chafe was my Lord of Morton, who, to say truth, looketh on such occasions altogether uncanny, and, as it were, fiendish; and he says to my lord, for I was in the chamber taking orders about a cast of hawks that are to be fetched from Darnoway—they match your long-winged falcons, friend Adam."

"I will believe that when I see them fly as high a pitch," replied Woodcock, this professional observation forming a sort of parenthesis.

"However," said Michael, pursuing his tale, "my Lord of Morton, in a mighty chafe, asked my Lord Regent whether he was well dealt with—for my brother," said he, "should have had a gift to be Commendator of Kennaquhair, and to have all the temporalities erected into a lordship of regality for his benefit; and here," said he, "the false monks have had the insolence to chuse a new Abbot to put his claim in my brother's way; and moreover, the rascality

of the neighbourhood have burnt and plundered all that was left in the Abbey, so that my brother will not have a house to dwell in, when he hath ousted the lazy hounds of priests. And my lord seeing him chafed, said mildly to him, These are shrewd tidings, Douglass, but I trust they be not true; for Halbert Glendinning went southward yesterday, with a band of spears, and assuredly had either of these chances happened, that the monks had presumed to chuse an Abbot, or that the Abbey had been burnt, as you say, he had taken order on the spot for the punishment of such insolence, and had dispatched us a messenger. And the Earl of Morton replied—Now I pray you, Adam, to notice that I say this out of love to you and your lord, and also for old comradeship, and also because Sir Halbert hath done me good, and may again—and also because I love not the Earl of Morton, as indeed more fear than like him. So then it were a foul deed in you to betray me.—But said the Earl to the Regent, Take heed, my lord, you trust not this Glendinning too

far—he comes of churl's blood, which was never true to the nobles—by Saint Andrew these were his very words.—And besides, he said, he hath a brother a monk in Saint Mary's, and walks all by his guidance, and is making friends on the Border with Buccleuch and with Fernieherst, and will join hand with them, were there likelihood of a new world. And my lord answered, like a free noble lord as he is: Tush! my Lord of Morton, I will be warrant for Glendinning's faith; and for his brother, he is a dreamer, that thinks of nought but book and breviary—and if such hap have chanced as you tell of, I look to receive from Glendinning the cowl of a hanged monk, and the head of a riotous churl, by way of sharp and sudden justice.—And my Lord of Morton left the place, and, as it seemed to me, somewhat malcontent. But since that time, my lord has asked me more than once whether there has arrived no messenger from the Knight of Avenel. And all this I have told you, that you may frame your

discourse to the best purpose, for it seems to me that my lord will not be well pleased, if aught has happened like what my Lord of Morton said, and if your lord hath not ta'en strict orders with it."

There was something in this communication which fairly blanked the bold visage of Adam Woodcock, in spite of the reinforcement which his natural hardihood had received from the berry-brown ale of Holyrood.

"What was it he said, about a churl's head, that grim Lord of Morton?" said the discontented falconer to his friend.

"Nay, it was my Lord Regent, who said that he expected, if the Abbey was injured, your Knight would send him the head of the ringleader among the rioters."

"Nay, but is this done like a good Protestant," said Adam Woodcock, "or a true lord of the Congregation? We used to be their white-boys and darlings when we pulled down the convents in Fife and Perthshires."

"Ay, but that," said Michael, "was when old mother Rome held her own, and her great folks were determined she should have no shelter for her head in Scotland. But now, that the priests are fled in all quarters, and their houses and lands are given to our grandees, they cannot see that we are working the work of reformation in destroying the palaces of zealous Protestants."

"But I tell you Saint Mary's is not destroyed!" said Woodcock, in increasing agitation; "some trash of painted windows there were broken—things that no nobleman could have brooked in his house—some stone saints were brought on their marrow-bones, like old Widdrington at Chevy-Chace; but as for fire-raising, there was not so much as a lighted lunt amongst us, save the match which the dragon had to light the burning tow withal, which he was to spit against Saint George; nay, I had caution of that."

"How! Adam Woodcock," said his com-

rade, " I trust thou hadst no hand in such a fair work. Look you, Adam, I were loth to terrify you, and you just come from a journey; but I promise you, Earl Morton hath brought you down a Maiden from Halifax, you never saw the like of her—and she'll clip you round the neck, and your head will remain in her arms."

" Pshaw!" answered Adam, " I am too old to have my head turned by any maiden of them all. I know my Lord of Morton will go as far for a buxom lass as any one; but what the devil took him to Halifax all the way? and if he have got a gamester there, what hath she to do with my head?"

" Much, much!" answered Michael. " Herod's daughter, who did such execution with her foot and ancle, danced not men's heads off more cleanly than this Maiden of Morton. 'Tis an axe, man,—an axe which falls of itself like a sash window, and never gives the headsman the trouble to wield it."

" By my faith, a shrewd device," said Woodcock; " heaven keep us free on't!"

The page, seeing no end to the conversation between these two old comrades, and anxious, from what he had heard, concerning the fate of the Abbot, now interrupted their conference.

"Methinks," he said, "Adam Woodcock, thou hadst better deliver thy master's letter to the Regent; questionless he hath therein stated what has chanced at Kennaquhair, in the way most advantageous for all concerned."

"The boy is right," said Michael Wing-the-wind, "my lord will be very impatient."

"The child hath wit enough to keep himself warm," said Adam Woodcock, producing from his hawking-bag his lord's letter, addressed to the Earl of Murray, "and for that matter so have I. So, Master Roland, you will e'en please to present this yourself to the Lord Regent; his presence will be better graced by a young page than by an old falconer."

"Well said, canny Yorkshire!" replied

his friend; "and but now you were so earnest to see our good Lord!—Why, wouldst thou put the lad into the noose that thou mayest slip tether thyself?—or doest thou think the Maiden will clasp his fair young neck more willingly than thy old sun-burnt weasand?"

"Go to," answered the falconer; "thy wit towers high an it could strike the quarry. I tell thee, the youth has nought to fear—he had nothing to do with the gambol—a rare gambol it was, Michael, as madcaps ever played; and I had made as rare a ballad, if we had had the luck to get it sung to an end. But mum for that—*tace*, as I said before, is Latin for a candle. Carry the youth to the presence, and I will remain here, with bridle in hand, ready to strike the spurs up to the rowel-heads, in case the hawk flies my way.—I will soon put Soltraedge, I trow, betwixt the Regent and me, if he means me less than fair play."

"Come on then, my lad," said Michael, "since thou must needs take the spring be-

fore canny Yorkshire." So saying, he led the way through winding passages, closely followed by Roland Græme, until they arrived at a large winding stone stair, the steps of which were so long and broad, and at the same time so low, as to render the ascent uncommonly easy. When they had ascended about the height of one storey, the guide stepped aside, and pushed open the door of a dark and gloomy anti-chamber; so dark indeed, that his youthful companion stumbled, and nearly fell down upon a low step, which was awkwardly placed on the very threshold.

"Take heed," said Michael Wing-the-wind, in a very low tone of voice, and first glancing cautiously round to see if any one listened—"Take heed, my young friend, for those who fall on these boards seldom arise again—Seest thou that," he added, in a still lower voice, pointing to some dark crimson stains on the floor, on which a ray of light shot through a small aperture, and traversing the general gloom of the apart-

ment, fell with mottled radiance—" Seest thou that, youth?—walk warily, for men have fallen here before you."

" What mean you?" said the page, his flesh creeping, though he scarce knew why; " Is it blood?"

" Ay, ay," said the domestic, in the same whispering tone, and dragging the youth on by the arm—" Blood it is,—but this is no time to question, or even to look at it. Blood it is, foully and fearfully shed —as foully and fearfully avenged. The blood," he added, in a still more cautious tone, " of Seignior David."

Roland Græme's heart throbbed when he found himself so unexpectedly in the scene of Rizzio's slaughter, a catastrophe which had chilled with horror all even in that rude age, which had been the theme of wonder and pity through every cottage and castle in Scotland, and had not escaped that of Avenel. But his guide hurried him forward, permitting no further question, and with the manner of one who has already tampered too much with

a dangerous subject. A tap which he made at a low door at one end of the vestibule, was answered by a huissier or usher, who, opening it cautiously, received Michael's intimation that a page waited the Regent's leisure, who brought letters from the Knight of Avenel.

"The Council is breaking up," said the usher; "but give me the packet, his grace the Regent will presently see the messenger."

"The packet," replied the page, "must be delivered into the Regent's own hands; such were the orders of my master."

The usher looked at him from head to foot, as if surprised at his boldness, and then replied, with some asperity, "Say you so, my young master? Thou crowest loudly to be but a chicken, and from a country barnyard too."

"Were it a time or place," said Roland, "thou shouldst see I can do more than crow; but do your duty, and let the Regent know I wait his pleasure."

"Thou art but a pert knave to tell me of my duty," said the courtier in office; "but I will find a time to shew you you are out of yours; meanwhile, wait there till you are wanted." So saying, he shut the door in Roland's face.

Michael Wing-the-wind, who had shrunk from his youthful companion during this altercation, according to the established maxim of courtiers of all ranks, and in all ages, now transgressed their prudential line of conduct so far as to come up to him once more. "Thou art a hopeful young spring-ald," said he, "and I see right well old Yorkshire had reason in his caution. Thou hast been five minutes in the court, and hast employed thy time so well, as to make a powerful and a mortal enemy out of the usher of the council-chamber. Why, man, you might almost as well have offended the deputy-butler."

"I care not what he is," said Roland Græme; "I will teach whomsoever I speak with, to speak civilly to me in return. I

did not come from Avenel to be brow-beaten in Holyrood."

"Bravo, my lad!" said Michael; "it is a fine spirit if you can but hold it—but see, the door opens."

The usher appeared, and, in a more civil tone of voice and manner, said, that his Grace the Regent would receive the Knight of Avenel's message; and accordingly marshalled Roland Græme the way into the apartment, from which the Council had been just dismissed, after finishing their consultations. There was in the room a long oaken table, surrounded by stools of the same wood, with a large elbow chair, covered with crimson velvet, at the head. Writing materials and papers were lying there in apparent disorder; and one or two of the privy counsellors who had lingered behind, assuming their cloaks, bonnets, and swords, and bidding farewell to the Regent, were departing slowly by a large door, on the opposite side to that through which the page entered. Apparently the Earl of Mur-

ray had made some jest, for the smiling countenances of the statesmen expressed that sort of cordial reception which is paid by courtiers to the condescending pleasantries of a prince.

The Regent himself was laughing heartily as he said, "Farewell, my lords, and hold me remembered to the Cock of the North."

He then turned slowly round towards Roland Græme, and the marks of gaiety, real or assumed, disappeared from his countenance, as completely as the passing bubbles leave the dark mirror of a still profound lake into which a traveller has cast a stone: in the course of a minute his noble features had assumed their natural expression of deep and even melancholy gravity.

This distinguished statesman, for as such his worst enemies acknowledged him, possessed all the external dignity, as well as almost all the noble qualities, which could grace the power that he enjoyed; and had he succeeded to the throne as his legitimate inheritance, it is probable he would have

been recorded as one of Scotland's wisest and greatest kings. But that he held his authority by the deposition and imprisonment of his sister and benefactress, was a crime which those only can excuse who think ambition an apology for ingratitude. He was dressed plainly in black velvet, after the Flemish fashion, and wore in his high-crowned hat a jewelled clasp, which looped it up on one side, and formed the only ornament of his apparel. He had his poniard by his side, and his sword lay on the council table.

Such was the personage before whom Roland Græme now presented himself, with a feeling of breathless awe, very different from the usual boldness and vivacity of his temper. In fact, he was, from education and nature, forward but not impudent, and was much more easily controuled by the moral superiority, arising from the elevated talents and renown of those with whom he conversed, than by pretensions founded only on rank or external shew. He might have braved with indifference the presence of an

earl, merely distinguished by his belt and coronet; but he felt overawed in that of the eminent soldier and statesman, the wielder of a nation's power, and the leader of her armies. The greatest and wisest are flattered by the deference of youth—so graceful and becoming in itself; and Murray took, with much courtesy, the letter from the hands of the abashed and blushing page, and answered with complaisance to the imperfect and half-muttered greeting which he endeavoured to deliver to him on the part of Sir Halbert of Avenel. He even paused a moment ere he broke the silk with which the letter was secured, to ask the page his name—so much he was struck with his very handsome features and form.

"Roland Græme," he said, repeating the words after the hesitating page. "What! of the Grahames of the Lennox?"

"No, my lord," replied Roland; "my parents dwelt in the Debateable Land."

Murray made no farther enquiry, but proceeded to read his dispatches; during the perusal of which, his brow began to as-

sume a stern expression of displeasure, as that of one who found something which at once surprised and disturbed him. He sate down on the nearest seat, frowned till his eyebrows almost met together, read the letter twice over, and was then silent for several minutes. At length, raising his head, his eye encountered that of the usher, who in vain endeavoured to exchange the look of eager and curious observation with which he had been perusing the Regent's features, for that open and unnoticing expression of countenance, which, in looking at all, seems as if it saw and marked nothing—a cast of look which may be practised with advantage by all those, of whatsoever degree, who are admitted to witness the familiar and unguarded hours of their superiors. Great men are as jealous of their thoughts as the wife of King Candaules was of her charms, and will as readily punish those who have, however involuntarily, beheld them in mental deshabille and exposure.

"Leave the apartment, Hyndman," said

the Regent sternly, "and carry your observation elsewhere. You are too knowing, sir, for your post, which, by special order, is destined for men of blunter capacity. So! now you look more like a fool than you did —(for Hyndman, as may easily be supposed, was not a little discouraged by this rebuke)—keep that confused stare, and it may keep you your office. Begone, sir!"

The usher departed in dismay, not forgetting to register, amongst his other causes of dislike to Roland Græme, that he had been the witness of this disgraceful chiding. When he had left the apartment, the Regent again addressed the page.

"Your name you say is Armstrong?"

"No," replied Roland, "my name is Græme, so please you—Roland Græme, whose forbears were designated of Heathergill, in the Debateable Land."

"Ay, I knew it was a name from the Debateable Land. Hast thou any acquaintances here in Edinburgh?"

"My lord," replied Roland, willing ra-

ther to evade this question than to answer it directly, for the prudence of being silent with respect to Lord Seyton's adventure immediately struck him, "I have been in Edinburgh scarce an hour, and that for the first time in my life."

"What! and thou Sir Halbert Glendinning's page?" said the Regent.

"I was brought up as my Lady's page," said the youth, "and left Avenel Castle for the first time in my life—at least since my childhood—only three days since."

"My Lady's page!" repeated the Earl of Murray, as if speaking to himself; "it was strange to send his Lady's page on a matter of such deep concernment—Morton will say it is of a piece with the nomination of his brother to be Abbot; and yet in some sort an inexperienced youth will best serve the turn.—What hast thou been taught, young man, in thy doughty apprenticeship?"

"To hunt, my lord, and to hawk," said Roland Græme.

"To hunt coneys, and to hawk at ouzels?" said the Regent smiling; "for such are the sports of ladies and their followers."

Græme's cheek reddened deeply as he replied, not without some emphasis, "To hunt red deer of the first head, and to strike down herons of the highest soar, my lord, which, in Lothian speech, may be termed, for aught I know, coneys and ouzels;—also, I can wield a brand and couch a lance according to our Border meaning; in inland speech these may be termed water-flags and bull-rushes."

"Thy speech rings like metal," said the Regent, "and I pardon the sharpness of it for the truth.—Thou knowest, then, what belongs to the duty of a man-at-arms."

"So far as exercise can teach it, without real service in the field," answered Roland Græme; "but our Knight permitted none of his household to make raids, and I never had the good fortune to see a stricken field."

"The good fortune!" repeated the Re-

gent, smiling somewhat sorrowfully, "take my word, young man, war is the only game from which both parties rise losers."

"Not always, my lord!" answered the page, with his characteristic audacity, "if fame speaks truth."

"How, sir?" said the Regent, colouring in his turn, and perhaps suspecting an indiscreet allusion to the height which he himself had attained by the hap of civil war.

"Because, my lord," said Roland Græme, without change of tone, "he who fights well, must have fame in life, or honour in death; and so war is a game from which no one can rise a loser."

The Regent smiled and shook his head, when at that moment the door opened, and the Earl of Morton presented himself.

"I come somewhat hastily," he said, "and I enter unannounced, because my news are of weight—It is as I said, Edward Glendinning is named Abbot, and"——

"Hush, my lord!" said the Regent, "I know it, but"——

"And perhaps you knew it before I did, my Lord of Murray," answered Morton, his dark red brow growing darker and redder as he spoke.

"Morton," said Murray, "suspect me not—touch not mine honour—I have to suffer enough from the calumnies of foes, let me not have to contend with the unjust suspicions of my friends.—We are not alone," said he, recollecting himself, "or I could tell you more."

He led Morton into one of the deep embrasures which the windows formed in the massive wall, and which afforded a retiring place for their conversing apart. In this recess, Roland observed them speak together with much earnestness, Murray appearing to be grave and earnest, and Morton having a jealous and offended air, which seemed gradually to give way to the assurances of the Regent.

As their conversation grew more earnest, they became gradually louder in speech, having perhaps forgotten the presence of

the page, the more readily as his position in the apartment placed him out of sight, so that he found himself unwillingly privy to more of their discourse than he cared to hear. For, page though he was, a mean curiosity after the secrets of others had never been numbered amongst Roland's failings; and moreover, with all his natural rashness, he could not but doubt the safety of becoming privy to the secret discourse of these powerful and dreaded men. Still he could neither stop his ears, nor with propriety leave the apartment; and while he thought of some means of signifying his presence, he had already heard so much, that, to have produced himself suddenly would have been as awkward, and perhaps as dangerous, as in quiet to abide the end of their conference. What he overheard, however, was but an imperfect part of their communication; and although a more expert politician, acquainted with the circumstances of the times, would have had little difficulty in tracing the meaning, yet Roland Græme

could only form very general and vague conjectures as to the import of their discourse.

"All is prepared," said Murray, "and Lindesay is setting forward—She must hesitate no longer—thou seest I act by thy counsel, and harden myself against softer considerations."

"True, my lord," replied Morton, "in what is necessary to gain power, you do not hesitate, but go boldly to the mark. But are you as careful to defend and preserve what you have won?—Why this establishment of domestics around her?—has not your mother men and maidens enough to tend her, but you must consent to this superfluous and dangerous retinue?"

"For shame, Morton!—a Princess, and my sister, could I do less than allow her due tendance?"

"Ay," replied Morton, "even thus fly all your shafts—smartly enough loosened from the bow, and not unskilfully aimed—but a breath of foolish affection ever crosses

in the mid volley, and sways the arrow from the mark."

"Say not so, Morton!" replied Murray, "I have both dared and done"——

"Yes, enough to gain, but not enough to keep—reckon not that she will think and act thus—you have wounded her deeply, both in pride and in power—it signifies nought, that you would tent now the wound with unavailing salves—as matters stand with you, you must forfeit the title of an affectionate brother, to hold that of a bold and determined statesman."

"Morton!" said Murray with some impatience, "I brook not these taunts—what I have done I have done—what I must further do, I must and will—but I am not made of iron like thee, and I cannot but remember—Enough of this—my purpose holds."

"And I warrant me," said Morton, "the choice of these domestic consolations will rest with"——

Here he whispered names which escaped

Roland Græme's ear. Murray replied in a similar tone, but so much raised towards the conclusion of the sentence, that the page heard these words—" And of him I hold myself secure, by Glendinning's recommendation."

" Ay, which may be as much trust-worthy as his late conduct at the Abbey of Saint Mary's—you have heard his brother's election has taken place. Your favourite Sir Halbert, my Lord of Murray, has as much fraternal affection as yourself."

" By heaven, Morton, that taunt demanded an unfriendly answer, but I pardon it, for your brother also is concerned; but this election shall be annulled. I tell you, Earl of Morton, while I hold the sword of state in my royal nephew's name, neither Lord nor Knight in Scotland shall dispute my authority; and if I bear with insults from my friends, it is only while I know them to be such, and forgive their follies for their faithfulness."

Morton muttered what seemed to be

some excuse, and the Regent answered him in a milder tone, and then subjoined, "Besides, I have a pledge besides Glendinning's recommendation for this youth's fidelity—his nearest relative has placed herself in my hands as his security, to be dealt withal as his doings shall deserve."

"That is something," replied Morton; "but yet in fair love and good will, I must still pray you to keep on your guard. The foes are stirring again, as horse-flies and hornets become busy so soon as the storm-blast is over. George of Seyton was cropping the causeway this morning with a score of men at his back, and had a ruffle with my friends of the House of Leslie—they met at the Trone, and were fighting hard, when the provost, with his guard of partizans, came in thirds-man, and staved them asunder with their halberts, as men part dog and bear."

"He hath my order for such interference," said the Regent—"Has any one been hurt?"

"George of Seyton himself, by Black Ralph Leslie—the devil take the rapier that ran not through from side to side! Ralph has a bloody coxcomb, by a blow from a messan-page whom nobody knew—Dick Seyton of Windygowl is run through the arm, and two gallants of the Leslies have suffered phlebotomy. This is all the gentle blood which has been spilled in the revel; but a yeoman or two on both sides have had bones broken and ears cropped. The ostlere-wives, who are like to be the only losers by their miscarriage, have dragged the knaves off the street, and are crying a drunken coronach over them."

"You take it lightly, Douglas," said the Regent; "these broils and feuds would shame the capital of the Great Turk, let alone that of a Christian and reformed state. But, if I live, this gear shall be amended; and men shall say, when they read my story, that if it were my cruel hap to rise to power by the dethronement of a sister, I employed it, when gained, for the benefit of the commonweal."

"And of your friends," replied Morton; "wherefore I trust for your instant order annulling the election of this lurdane Abbot, Edward Glendinning."

"You shall be presently satisfied," and, stepping forward, he began to call, "So ho, Hyndman!" when suddenly his eye lighted on Roland Græme—"By my faith, Douglas," said he, turning to his friend, "here have been three at counsel."

"Ay, but only two can keep counsel," said Morton; "the galliard must be disposed of."

"For shame, Morton—an orphan boy! —Hearken thee, my child—Thou hast told me of some of thy accomplishments—can'st thou speak truth?"

"Ay, my lord, when it serves my turn," replied Græme.

"It shall serve thy turn now," said the Regent; "and falsehood shall be thy destruction. How much hast thou heard or understood of what we two have spoken together?"

"But little, my lord," replied Roland Græme boldly, "which met my apprehension, saving that it seemed to me as if in something you doubted the faith of the Knight of Avenel, under whose roof I was nurtured."

"And what hast thou to say on that point, young man?" continued the Regent, bending his eyes upon him with a keen and strong expression of observation.

"That," said the page, "depends on the quality of those who speak against his honour whose bread I have long eaten.—If they be my inferiors, I say they lie, and will maintain what I say with my batton; if my equals, still I say they lie, and will do battle in the quarrel, if they list, with my sword; if my superiors"—he paused.

"Proceed boldly," said the Regent—"What if thy superior said aught that nearly touched your master's honour?"

"I would say," replied Græme, "that he did ill to slander the absent, and that my

master was a man who could render an account of his actions to any one who should manfully demand it of him to his face."

"And it were manfully said," replied the Regent—"what thinkst thou, my Lord of Morton?'

"I think," replied Morton, "that if the young galliard resemble a certain ancient friend of ours, as much in the craft of his disposition as he does in eye and in brow, there may be a wide difference betwixt what he means and what he speaks."

"And whom meanest thou that he resembles so closely?" said Murray.

"Even the true and trusty Julian Avenel," replied Morton.

"But this youth belongs to the Debateable Land," said Murray.

"It may be so; but Julian was an outlying striker of venison, and made many a far cast when he had a fair doe in chase."

"Pshaw!" said the Regent, "this is but idle talk—Here, thou Hyndman—thou Curiosity—conduct this youth to his compa-

nion—You will both," he said to Græme, "keep yourselves in readiness to travel on short notice."—And then motioning to him courteously to withdraw, he broke up the interview.

CHAPTER IV.

It is and is not—'tis the thing I sought for,
Have kneel'd for, pray'd for, risk'd my fame and life for,
And yet it is not—no more than the shadow
Upon the hard, cold, flat, and polish'd mirror,
Is the warm, graceful, rounded, living substance
Which it presents in form and lineament.

Old Play.

The usher, with gravity which ill concealed a jealous scowl, conducted Roland Græme to a lower apartment, where he found his comrade the falconer. The man of office then briefly acquainted them that this would be their residence till his Grace's further orders; that they were to go to the pantry, to the buttery, to the cellar, and to the kitchen, at the usual hours, to receive the allowances becoming their station,—instructions which Adam Woodcock's old familiarity with the court made him perfect-

ly understand—" For your beds," he said, " you must go to the hostelrie of Saint Michael's, in respect the palace is now full of the domestics of the greater nobles."

No sooner was the usher's back turned than Adam exclaimed, with all the glee of eager curiosity, " And now, Master Roland, the news—the news—come, unbutton thy pouch, and give us thy tidings—What says the Regent? asks he for Adam Woodcock?—and is all soldered up, or must the Abbot of Unreason strap for it?"

" All is well in that quarter," said the page; " and for the rest—But, hey-day, what, have you taken the chain and medal off from my bonnet?"

" And meet time it was, when yon usher, vinegar-faced rogue that he is, began to enquire what popish trangam you were wearing—By the mass, the metal would have been confiscated for conscience-sake, like your other rattle-trap yonder at Avenel, which Mrs Lilias bears about on her shoes in the guise of a pair of shoe-buckles

—This comes of carrying popish nicknackets about you."

"The jade!" exclaimed Roland Græme, "has she melted down my rosary into buckles for her clumsy hoofs, which will become such a garnish well nigh as well as a cow's might—But, hang her, let her keep them—many a dog's trick have I played old Lilias, for want of having something better to do, and the buckles will serve for a remembrance. Do you remember the verjuice I put into the comfits, when old Wingate and she were to breakfast together on Easter morning?"

"In troth do I, Master Roland—the major-domo's mouth was as crooked as a hawk's beak for the whole morning afterward, and any other page in your room would have tasted the discipline of the porter's lodge for it—But my lady's favour stood between your skin and many a jerking—Lord send you may be the better for her protection in such matters."

"I am at least grateful for it, Adam; and I am glad you put me in mind of it."

"Well, but the news, my young master," said Woodcock, "spell me the tidings—what are we to fly at next?—what did the Regent say to you?"

"Nothing that I am to repeat again," said Roland Græme, shaking his head.

"Why, hey-day," said Adam, "how prudent we are become all of a sudden! You have advanced rarely in brief space, Master Roland. You have well nigh had your broken head, and you have gained your gold chain, and you have made an enemy, Master Usher to wit, with his two legs like hawk's perches, and you have had audience of the first man in the realm, and bear as much mystery in your brow, as if you had flown in the court-sky ever since you were hatched.—I believe, in my soul, you would run with a piece of the egg-shell on your head like the curlieus, whom (I would we were after them again) we used to call whaups in the Halidome and its neighbour-

hood.—But sit thee down, boy; Adam Woodcock was never the lad to seek to enter into forbidden secrets—sit thee down, and I will go fetch the vivers—I know the butler and the pantler of old."

The good-natured falconer set forth upon his errand, busying himself about procuring their refreshment; and, during his absence, Roland Græme abandoned himself to the strange, complicated, and yet heart-stirring reflections, to which the events of the morning had given rise. Yesterday he was of neither mark nor likelihood, a vagrant boy, the attendant on a relative, of whose sane judgment he himself had not the highest opinion; but now he had become, he knew not why, or wherefore, or to what extent, the custodier, as the Scottish phrase went, of some important state secret, in the safe keeping of which the Regent himself was concerned. It did not diminish from, but rather added to the interest of a situation so unexpected, that Roland himself did not perfectly understand wherein he

stood committed by the state secrets, in which he had unwittingly become participator. On the contrary, he felt like one who looks on a romantic landscape, of which he sees the features for the first time, and then obscured with mist and driving tempest. The imperfect glimpse which the eye catches of rocks, trees, and other objects around him, adds double dignity to these shrouded mountains and darkened abysses, of which the height, depth, and extent, are left to imagination.

But mortals, especially at the well appetized age which precedes twenty years, are seldom so much engaged either by real or conjectural subjects of speculation, but what their earthly wants claim their hour of attention. And with many a smile did our hero, so the reader may term him if he will, hail the re-appearance of his friend Adam Woodcock, bearing on one wooden platter a tremendous portion of boiled beef, and on another a plentiful allowance of

greens, or rather what the Scotch call lang-kaill. A groom followed with bread, salt, and the other means of setting forth a meal; and when they had both placed on the oaken table what they bore in their hands, the falconer observed, that since he knew the court, it had got harder and harder every day to the poor gentlemen and yeomen retainers, but that now it was an absolute flaying of a flea for the hide and tallow. Such thronging to the wicket, and such churlish answers, and such bare beef-bones, such a shouldering at the buttery-hatch and cellarage, and nought to be gained beyond small insufficient single ale, or at best with a single straike of malt to counterbalance a double allowance of water—" By the mass, though, my young friend," said he, while he saw the food disappearing fast under Roland's active exertions, " it is not so well to lament for former times as to take the advantage of the present, else we are like to lose on both sides."

So saying, Adam Woodcock drew his

chair towards the table, unsheathed his knife, for every one carried that minister of festive distribution for himself, and imitated his young companion's example, who for the moment had lost his anxiety for the future in the eager satisfaction of an appetite sharpened by youth and abstinence.

In truth, they made, though the materials were sufficiently simple, a very respectable meal, at the expence of the royal allowance; and Adam Woodcock, notwithstanding the deliberate censure which he had passed on the household beer of the palace, had taken the fourth deep draught of the black jack ere he remembered him that he had spoken in its dispraise. Flinging himself jollily and luxuriously back in an old danske elbow-chair, and looking with a careless glee towards the page, extending at the same time his right leg, and stretching the other easily over it, he reminded his companion that he had not yet heard the ballad which he had made for the Abbot of Unreason's

revel. And accordingly he struck merrily up with

> "The Pope, that pagan full of pride,
> Has blinded us full lang"——

Roland Græme, who felt no great delight, as may be supposed, in the falconer's satire, considering its subject, began to snatch up his mantle, and fling it around his shoulders, an action which instantly interrupted the ditty of Adam Woodcock.

"Where the vengeance are you going now," he said, "thou restless boy?—Thou hast quicksilver in the veins of thee to a certainty, and can'st no more abide any douce and sensible communing, than a hoodless hawk would keep perched on my wrist!"

"Why, Adam," replied the page, "if you must needs know, I am about to take a walk and look at this fair city. One may as well be still mewed up in the old castle of the lake, if one is to sit the livelong night between four stone walls, and hearken to old ballads."

"It is a new ballad—the Lord help thee!" replied Adam, "and that one of the best that ever was matched with a rousing chorus."

"Be it so," said the page, "I will hear it another day, when the rain is dashing against thewi ndows, and there is neither steed stamping, nor spur jingling, nor feather waving in the neighbourhood, to mar my marking it well. But, even now, I want to be in the world, and to look about me."

"But the never a stride shall you go without me," said the falconer, "until the Regent shall take you whole and sound off my hand; and so, if you will, we may go to the hostelry of Saint Michael's, and there you will see company enough, but through the casement, mark you me; for as to rambling through the street to seek Seytons and Leslies, and having a dozen holes drilled in your new jacket with rapier and poniard, I will yield no way to it."

"To the hostelry of Saint Michael's then, with all my heart," said the page; and they

left the palace accordingly, rendered to the centinels at the gate, who had now taken their posts for the evening, a strict account of their names and business, were dismissed through a small wicket of the close-barred portal, and soon reached the inn or hostelry of Saint Michael, which stood in a large court-yard, off the main street, close under the descent of the Calton-hill. The place, wide, waste, and uncomfortable, resembled rather an Eastern caravansery, where men found shelter indeed, but were obliged to supply themselves with every thing else, than one of our modern inns;

> Where not one comfort shall to those be lost,
> Who never ask, or never feel, the cost.

But still, to the inexperienced eye of Roland Græme, the bustle and confusion of this place of public resort, furnished excitement and amusement. In the large room, into which they had rather found their own way than been ushered by mine host, travellers and natives of the city en-

tered and departed, met and greeted, gamed or drank together, regardless of each other's presence, forming the strongest contrast to the stern and monotonous order and silence with which matters were conducted in the well-ordered household of the Knight of Avenel. Altercation of every kind, from brawling to jesting, was going on amongst the groupes around them, and yet the noise and mingled voices seemed to disturb no one, and indeed to be noticed by no others than by those who composed the groupe to which the speaker belonged.

The falconer passed through the apartment to a projecting latticed window, which formed a sort of recess from the room itself; and having here ensconced himself and his companion, he called for some refreshments; and a tapster, after he had shouted for the twentieth time, accommodated him with the remains of a cold capon and a neat's tongue, together with a pewter stoup of weak French vin-de-pais. "Fetch a stoup of brandy-wine, thou knave—We will be jolly to-night, Master Roland," said he, when

he saw himself thus accommodated, " and let care come to-morrow."

But Roland had eaten too lately to enjoy the good cheer; and feeling his curiosity much sharper than his appetite, he made it his choice to look out of the lattice, which overhung a large yard, surrounded by the stables of the hostelry, and fed his eyes on the busy sight beneath, while Adam Woodcock, after he had compared his companion to the " Laird of Macfarlane's geese, who liked their play better than their meat," disposed of his time with the aid of cup and trencher, occasionally humming the burthen of his birth-strangled ballad, and beating time to it with his fingers on the little round table. In this exercise he was frequently interrupted by the exclamations of his companion, as he saw something new in the yard beneath, to attract and interest him.

It was a busy scene, for the number of gentlemen and nobles who were now crowded into the city, had filled all spare stables and places of public reception with their horses

and military attendants. There were some score of yeomen, dressing their own or their masters' horses in the yard, whistling, singing, laughing, and upbraiding each other in a style of wit which the good order of Avenel Castle rendered strange to Roland Græme's ears. Others were busy repairing their own arms, or cleaning those of their masters. One fellow having just bought a bundle of twenty spears, was sitting in a corner, employed in painting the white handles of the weapons with yellow and vermillion. Other lacqueys led large stag-hounds, or wolf-dogs, of noble race, carefully muzzled to prevent accidents to passengers. All came and went, mixed together and separated, under the delighted eye of the page, whose imagination had not even conceived a scene so gaily diversified with the objects he had most pleasure in beholding; so that he was perpetually breaking the quiet reverie of honest Woodcock, and the mental progress which he was making in his ditty, by exclaiming, "Look here, Adam—look at the bonny

bay horse—Saint Anthony, what a gallant forehand he hath got!—and see the goodly grey, which yonder fellow in the frieze-jacket is dressing as awkwardly as if he had never touched aught but a cow—I would I were nigh him to teach him his trade!—And lo you, Adam, the gay Milan armour that the yeoman is scouring, all steel and silver, like our Knight's prime suit, of which old Wingate makes such account—And see to yonder pretty wench, Adam, who comes tripping through them all with her milk-pail—I warrant me she has had a long walk from the loaning; she has a stammel waistcoat, like your favourite Cissly Sunderland, Master Adam."

"By my hood, lad," answered the falconer, "it is well for thee thou wert brought up where grace grew. Even in the Castle of Avenel thou wert a wild-blood enough, but hadst thou been nurtured here, within a flight-shot of the Court, thou hadst been the veriest crack-hemp of a page that ever wore feather in thy bonnet or steel by thy

side: truly, I wish it may end well with thee."

"Nay, but leave thy senseless humming and drumming, old Adam, and come to the window ere thou hast drenched thy senses in the pint-pot there. See here comes a merry minstrel with his crowd, and a wench with him, that dances with bells at her ancles; and see, the yeomen and pages leave their horses and the armour they were cleaning, and gather round, as is very natural, to hear the music. Come, old Adam, we will thither too."

"You shall call me cutt if I do go down," said Adam; "you are near as good minstrelsy as he can make, if you had the grace to listen to it."

"But the wench in the stammel waistcoat is stopping too, Adam—by heaven, they are going to dance. Frieze jacket wants to dance with stammel-waistcoat, but she is coy and recusant."

Then suddenly changing his tone of levity into one of deep interest and surprise,

he exclaimed, "Queen of Heaven! what is it that I see!" and then remained silent.

The sage Adam Woodcock, who was in a sort of languid degree amused with the page's exclamations, even while he professed to despise them, became at length rather desirous to set his tongue once more a-going, that he might enjoy the superiority afforded by his own intimate familiarity with all the circumstances which excited in his young companion's mind so much wonderment.

"Well then," he said at last, "what is it you do see, Master Roland, that you have become mute all of a sudden?"

Roland returned no answer.

"I say, Master Roland Græme," said the falconer, "it is manners in my country for a man to speak when he is spoken to."

Roland Græme remained silent.

"The murrain is in the boy," said Adam Woodcock, "he has stared out his eyes and talked his tongue to pieces, I think."

The falconer hastily drank off his can of

wine, and came to Roland, who stood like a statue, with his eyes eagerly bent on the court-yard, though Adam Woodcock was unable to detect amongst the merry scene which it exhibited aught that could deserve such devoted attention.

"The lad is mazed!" said the falconer to himself.

But Roland Græme had good reasons for his surprise, though they were not such as he could communicate to his companion.

The touch of the old man's instrument, for he had already begun to play, had drawn in several auditors from the street, when one entered the gate of the yard, whose appearance exclusively arrested the attention of Roland Græme. He was of his own age, or a good deal younger, and from his dress and bearing might be of the same rank and calling, having all the air of coxcombry and pretension, which accorded with a handsome though slight and low figure, and an elegant dress, in part hid by a large purple cloak. As he entered, he

cast a glance up towards the windows, and to his extreme astonishment, under the purple velvet bonnet and white feather, Roland recognized the features so deeply impressed on his memory, the bright and clustered tresses, the laughing full blue eyes, the well-formed eye-brows, the nose, with the slightest possible inclination to be aquiline, the ruby lip, of which an arch and half suppressed smile seemed the habitual expression—in short, the form and face of Catherine Seyton; in man's attire, however, and mimicking, as it seemed, not unsuccessfully, the bearing of a youthful but forward page.

"Saint George and Saint Andrew!" said the astonished Roland Græme to himself, "was there ever such an audacious quean! —she seems a little ashamed of her mummery too, for she holds the lap of her cloak to her face, and her colour is heightened—but, Santa Maria, how she threads the throng, with as firm and bold a step as if she had never tied petticoat round her

waist—Holy saints! she holds up her riding-rod as if she would lay it about some of their ears, that stand most in her way—by the hand of my father, she bears herself like the very model of pagehood.—Hey! what! sure she will not strike frieze-jacket in earnest." But he was not long left in doubt; for the lout whom he had before repeatedly noticed, standing in the way of the bustling page, and maintaining his place with clownish obstinacy or stupidity, the advanced riding-rod was, without a moment's hesitation, sharply applied to his shoulders, in a manner which made him spring aside, rubbing the part of the body which had received so unceremonious a hint that it was in the way of his betters. The party injured growled forth an oath or two of indignation, and Roland Græme began to think of flying down stairs to the assistance of the translated Catherine; but the laugh of the yard was against frieze-jacket, which indeed had, in these days,

small chance of fair play in a quarrel with velvet and embroidery; so that the fellow, who was a menial in the inn, slunk back to finish his task of dressing the bonny grey, laughed at by all, but most by the wench in the stammel-waistcoat, his fellow-servant, who, to crown his disgrace, had the cruelty to cast an applauding smile upon the author of the injury, while, with a freedom more like the milk-maid of the town than she of the plains, she accosted him with—"Is there any one you want here, my pretty gentleman, that you seem in such haste?"

"I seek a sprig of a lad," said the seeming gallant, "with a sprig of holly in his cap, black hair and black eyes, green jacket, and the air of a country coxcomb—I have sought him through every close and alley in the Canongate, the fiend gore him!"

"Why, God-a-mercy, Nun!" muttered Roland Græme, much bewildered.

"I will enquire him presently out for your fair young worship," said the wench of the inn.

"Do," said the gallant squire, "and if you bring me to him, you shall have a groat to-night, and a kiss on Sunday when you have on a cleaner kirtle."

"Why, God-a-mercy, Nun!" again muttered Roland, "this is a note above E La."

In a moment after the servant entered the room, and ushered in the object of his surprise.

While the disguised vestal looked with unabashed brow, and bold and rapid glance of her eye, through the various parties in the large old room, Roland Græme, who felt an internal awkward sense of bashful confusion, which he deemed altogether unworthy of the bold and dashing character to which he aspired, determined not to be brow-beaten and put down by this singular female, but to meet her with a glance of recognition so sly, so penetrating, so expressively humorous, as should shew her at once he was in possession of her secret and master of her fate, and should compel her

to humble herself towards him, at least into the look and manner of respectful and deprecating observance.

This was extremely well planned; but just as Roland had called up the knowing glance, the suppressed smile, the shrewd intelligent look, which was to ensure his triumph, he encountered the bold, firm, and steady gaze of his brother or sister-page, who, casting on him a falcon glance, and recognizing him at once as the object of his search, walked up with the most unconcerned look, the most free and undaunted composure, and hailed him with "You, Sir Holly-top, I would speak with you."

The steady coolness and assurance with which these words were uttered, although the voice was the very voice he had heard at the old convent, and although the features more nearly resembled those of Catherine when seen close than when viewed from a distance, produced, nevertheless, such a confusion in Roland's mind, that he became uncertain whether he was not still

under a mistake from the beginning; the knowing shrewdness which should have animated his visage faded into a sheepish bashfulness, and the half-suppressed but most intelligible smile, became the senseless giggle of one who laughs to cover his own disorder of ideas.

"Do they understand a Scotch tongue in thy country, Holly-top?" said this marvellous specimen of metamorphosis. "I said I would speak with thee."

"What is your business with my comrade, my young chick of the game?" said Adam Woodcock, willing to step in to his companion's assistance, though totally at a loss to account for the sudden disappearance of all Roland's usual smartness and presence of mind.

"Nothing to you, my old cock of the perch," replied the gallant; "go mind your hawk's castings. I guess by your bag and your gauntlet that you are squire of the body to a sort of kites."

He laughed as he spoke, and the laugh

reminded Roland so irresistibly of the hearty fit of risibility, in which Catherine had indulged at his expence when they first met in the old nunnery, that he could scarce help exclaiming, "Catherine Seyton, by heavens!"—He checked the exclamation, however, and only said, "I think, sir, we two are not totally strangers to each other."

"We must have met in our dreams then," said the youth; "and my days are too busy to remember what I think at nights."

"Or apparently to remember upon one day those whom you may have seen on the preceding eve," said Roland Græme.

The youth in his turn cast on him a look of some surprise, as he replied, "I know no more of what you mean than does the horse I ride on—if there be offence in your words, you shall find me as ready to take it as any lad in Lothian."

"You know well," said Roland, "though, if it pleases you to use the language of a stranger, that with you I can have no purpose to quarrel."

"Let me do mine errand then, and be rid of you," said the page. "Step hither this way, out of that old leathern fist's hearing."

They walked into the recess of the window, which Roland had left upon the youth's entrance into the apartment. The messenger then turned his back on the company, after casting a hasty and sharp glance around to see if they were observed. Roland did the same, and the page in the purple mantle thus addressed him, taking at the same time from under his cloak a short but beautifully wrought sword, with the hilt and ornaments upon the sheath of silver, massively chased and over-gilded—"I bring you this weapon from a friend, who gives it you under the solemn condition, that you will not unsheath it until you are commanded by your rightful sovereign. For your warmth of temper is known, and the presumption with which you intrude yourself into the quarrels of others; and, therefore, this is laid upon you as a penance by those

who wish you well, and whose hand will influence your destiny for good or for evil. This is what I was charged to tell you. So if you will give a fair word for a fair sword, and pledge your promise, with hand and glove, good and well; and if not, I will carry back Caliburn to those who sent it."

"And may I not ask who these are?" said Roland Græme, admiring at the same time the beauty of the weapon thus offered him.

"My commission in no way leads me to answer such a question," said he of the purple mantle.

"But if I am offended," said Roland, "may I not draw to defend myself?"

"Not *this* weapon," answered the sword-bearer; "but you have your own at command, and, besides, for what do you wear your poniard?"

"For no good," said Adam Woodcock, who had now approached close to them; "and that I can witness as well as any one."

"Stand back, fellow," said the messenger;

" thou hast an intrusive curious face, that will come by a buffet if it is found where it has no concern."

" A buffet, my young Master Malapert," said Adam, drawing back however; " best keep down fist, or, by Our Lady, buffet will beget buffet!

" Be patient, Adam Woodcock," said Roland Græme;—" and let me pray you, fair sir, since by such addition you chuse for the present to be addressed, may I not barely unsheath this fair weapon, in pure simplicity of desire to know whether so fair a hilt and scabbard are matched with a befitting blade?"

" By no manner of means," said the messenger; " at a word, you must take it under the promise that you never draw it until you receive the commands of your lawful sovereign, or you must leave it alone."

" Under that condition, and coming from your friendly hand, I accept of the sword," said Roland, taking it from his hand; " but credit me, that if we are to work together in any weighty emprise, as I am induced to

believe, some confidence and openness on your part will be necessary to give the right impulse to my zeal—I press for no more at present, it is enough that you understand me."

"I understand you!" said the page, exhibiting the appearance of unfeigned surprise in his turn,—"Renounce me if I do—here you stand jiggetting, and sniggling, and looking cunning, as if there were some mighty matter of intrigue and common understanding betwixt you and me, whom you never set your eyes on before!"

"What!" said Roland Græme, "will you deny that we have met before?"

"Marry that I will, in any Christian court," said the other page.

"And will you also deny," said Roland, "that it was recommended to us to study each other's features well, that in whatsoever disguise the time might impose upon us, each should recognize in the other the secret agent of a mighty work? Do not you remember, that Sister Magdalen and Dame Bridget"——

The messenger here interrupted him, shrugging up his shoulders with a look of compassion, "Bridget and Magdalen! why this is madness and dreaming. Hark ye, master Holly-top, your wits are gone on wool-gathering; comfort yourself with a caudle, thatch your brain-sick noddle with a woollen night-cap, and so God be with you."

As he concluded this polite parting address, Adam Woodcock, who was again seated by the table on which stood the now empty can, said to him, "Will you drink a cup, young man, in the way of courtesy, now you have done your errand, and listen a good song?" and without waiting for an answer, he commenced his ditty,—

> "The Pope, that pagan full of pride,
> Hath blinded us full long"——

It is probable that the good wine had made some innovation in the falconer's brain, otherwise he would have recollected the danger of introducing any thing like political or polemical pleasantry into a public

assemblage, at a time when men's minds were in a state of great irritability. To do him justice, he perceived his error, and stopped short so soon as he saw that the word Pope had at once interrupted the separate conversations of the various parties which were assembled in the apartment; and that many began to draw themselves up, bridle, look big, and prepare to take part in the impending brawl; while others, more decent and cautious persons, hastily paid down their lawing, and prepared to leave the place ere bad should come to worse.

And to worse it was soon likely to come; for no sooner did Woodcock's ditty reach the ear of the stranger page, than, uplifting his riding-rod, he exclaimed, "He who speaks irreverently of the Holy Father of the church in my presence, is the cub of a heretic wolf-bitch, and I will switch him as I would a mongrel cur."

"And I will break thy young pate," said Adam, "if thou darest to lift a finger to

me." And then, in defiance of the young Drawcansir's threats, with a stout heart and dauntless accent, he again uplifted the stave.

> "The Pope, that pagan full of pride,
> Hath blinded"———

But Adam was able to proceed no farther, being himself unfortunately blinded by a stroke of the impatient youth's switch across his eyes. Enraged at once by the smart and the indignity, the falconer started up, and darkling as he was, for his eyes watered too fast to permit his seeing any thing, he would soon have been at close grips with his insolent adversary, had not Roland Græme, contrary to his nature, played for once the prudent man and the peacemaker, and thrown himself betwixt them, imploring Woodcock's patience. "You know not," he said, "with whom you have to do. —And thou," addressing the messenger, who stood scornfully laughing at Adam's rage, "get thee gone, whoever thou art; if thou

be'st what I guess thee, thou well knowest there are earnest reasons why thou shouldst."

"Thou hast hit right for once, Hollytop," said the gallant, "though I guess you drew your bow at a venture.—Here, host, let this yeoman have a pottle of wine to wash the smart out of his eyes—and there is a French crown for him." So saying, he threw the piece of money on the table, and left the apartment, with a quick yet steady pace, looking firmly at right and left, as if to defy interruption; and snapping his fingers at two or three respectable burghers, who, declaring it was a shame that any one should be suffered to rant and ruffle in defence of the Pope, were labouring to find the hilts of their swords, which had got for the present unhappily entangled in the folds of their cloaks. But, as the adversary was gone ere any of them had reached his weapon, they did not think it necessary to unsheathe cold iron, but merely observed to each other, "This is more than masterful violence, to see a poor man stricken

in the face, just for singing a ballad against the whore of Babylon. If the Pope's champions are to be bangsters in our very change-houses, we shall soon have the old shavelings back again."

"The provost should look to it," said another, "and have some five or six armed with partizans, to come in upon the first whistle, to teach these gallants their lesson. For, look you, neighbour Lugleather, it is not for decent householders like ourselves to be brawling with the godless grooms and pert pages of the nobles, that are bred up to little else save bloodshed and blasphemy."

"For all that, neighbour," said Lugleather "I would have curried that youngster as properly as ever I curried a lamb's hide, had not the hilt of my bilbo been for the instant beyond my grasp; and before I could turn my girdle, gone was my master."

"Ay," said the others, "the devil go with him, and peace abide with us—I give my rede, neighbours, that we pay the lawing, and be stepping homeward, like brother and brother; for old Saint Giles's is tolling

curfew, and the street grows dangerous at night."

With that the good burghers adjusted their cloaks, and prepared for their departure, while he that seemed the briskest of the three, laying his hand on his Andrea Ferrara, observed, "that they that spoke in praise of the Pope on the High-gate of Edinburgh, had best bring the sword of Saint Peter to defend them."

While the ill-humour, excited by the insolence of the young aristocrat was thus evaporating in empty menace, Roland Græme had to controul the far more serious indignation of Adam Woodcock. "Why, man, it was but a switch across the mazzard—blow your nose, dry your eyes, and you will see all the better for it."

"By this light, which I cannot see," said Adam Woodcock, "thou hast been false friend to me, young man—neither taking up my rightful quarrel, nor letting me fight it out myself."

"Fye for shame, Adam Woodcock," replied the youth, determined to turn the ta-

bles on him, and become in turn the counsellor of good order and peaceable demeanour—" I say fye for shame!—Alas, that you will speak thus! Here are you sent with me, to prevent my innocent youth getting into snares—"

" I wish your innocent youth were cut short with a halter, with all my heart," said Adam, who began to see which way the admonition tended.

"—And instead of setting before me," continued Roland, " an example of patience and sobriety becoming the falconer of Sir Halbert Glendinning, you quaff me off I know not how many flagons of ale, besides a gallon of wine, and a full measure of strong waters."

" It was but one poor pottle," said poor Adam, whom consciousness now reduced to a merely defensive warfare.

" It was enough to pottle you handsomely, however," said the page—" And then, instead of going to bed to sleep off your liquor, must you sit singing your roistering

songs about popes and pagans, till you have got your eyes almost switched out of your head; and but for my interference, whom your drunken ingratitude accuses of deserting you, yon galliard would have cut your throat, for he was whipping out a whinger as broad as my hand and as sharp as a razor—And these are lessons for an inexperienced youth!—Oh Adam! out upon you! out upon you!"

"Marry, amen, and with all my heart," said Adam; "out upon my folly for expecting any thing but impertinent raillery from a page like thee, that if he saw his father in a scrape would laugh at him instead of lending him aid."

"Nay, but I will lend you aid," said the page, still laughing, "that is, I will lend thee aid to thy chamber, good Adam, where thou shalt sleep off wine and ale, ire and indignation, and awake the next morning with as much fair wit as nature has blessed thee withal. Only one thing I will warn thee, good Adam, that henceforth and for ever,

when thou railest at me for being somewhat hot at hand, and rather too prompt to out with poniard or so, thy admonition shall serve as a prologue to the memorable adventure of the switching of Saint Michael's."

With such condoling expressions he got the crest-fallen falconer to his bed, and then retired to his own pallet, where it was some time ere he could fall asleep. If the messenger whom he had seen were really Catherine Seyton, what a masculine virago and termagant must she be! and stored with what an inimitable command of insolence and assurance!—The brass on her brow would furbish the front of twenty pages, and I should know, thought Roland, what that amounts to—And yet, her features, her look, her light gait, her laughing eye, the art with which she disposed the mantle to shew no more of her limbs than needs must be seen—I am glad she had at least that grace left—the voice, the smile—it must have been Catherine Seyton, or

the devil in her likeness. One thing is good, I have silenced the eternal predications of that ass, Adam Woodcock, who has set up for being a preacher and a governor over me, so soon as he has left the hawks' mew behind him.

And with this comfortable reflection, joined to the happy indifference which youth hath for the events of the morrow, Roland Græme fell fast asleep.

CHAPTER V.

Now have you reft from me my staff, my guide,
Who taught my youth, as men teach untamed falcons,
To use my strength discreetly—I am reft
Of comrade and of counsel.

Old Play.

In the grey of the next morning's dawn there was a loud knocking at the gate of the hostelry; and those without, proclaiming that they came in the name of the Regent, were instantly admitted. A moment or two afterwards, Michael Wing-the-wind stood by the bed-side of our travellers.

"Up! up!" he said, "there is no slumber where Murray hath work ado."

Both sleepers sprung up, and began to dress themselves.

"You, old friend," said Wing-the-wind to Adam Woodcock, "must to horse instantly, with this packet to the monks of Kennaquhair; and with this," delivering them as he spoke, "to the Knight of Avenel."

"As much as commanding the monks to annul their election, I'll warrant me, of an Abbot," quoth Adam Woodcock, as he put the packets into his bag, "and charging my master to see it done—To hawk at one brother with another, is less than fair play, methinks."

"Fash not thy beard about it, old boy," said Michael, "but betake thee to the saddle presently; for if these orders are not obeyed, there will be bare walls at the Kirk of Saint Mary's, and it may be at the Castle of Avenel to boot; for I heard my Lord of Morton loud with the Regent, and we are at a pass that we cannot stand with him anent trifles."

"But," said Adam, "touching the Abbot of Unreason—what say they to that outbreak?—An they be shrewishly disposed, I were better pitch the packets to Satan, and take the other side of the Border for my bield."

"O, that is passed over as a jest, since there was little harm done.—But, hark thee, Adam," continued his comrade, "if there

was a dozen vacant abbacies in your road, whether of jest or earnest, reason or unreason, draw thou never one of their mitres over thy brows—The time is not fitting, man!—besides, our Maiden longs to clip the neck of a fat churchman."

"She shall never sheer mine in that capacity," said the falconer, while he knotted the kerchief in two or three double folds around his sun-burnt bull-neck, calling out at the same time, "Master Roland, Master Roland, make haste! we must back to perch and mew, and thank heaven, more than our own wit, with our bones whole, and without a stab in the stomach."

"Nay, but," said Wing-the-wind, "the page goes not back with you, the Regent has other employment for him."

"Saints and sorrows!" exclaimed the falconer—"Master Roland Græme to remain here, and I to return to Avenel!—Why it cannot be—the child cannot manage himself in this wide world without me, and I question if he will stoop to any other

whistle than mine own; there are times I myself can hardly bring him to my lure."

It was at Roland's tongue's end to say something concerning the occasion they had for using mutually each other's prudence, but the real anxiety which Adam evinced at parting with him took away his disposition to such ungracious raillery. The falconer did not altogether escape, however, for, in turning his face towards the lattice, his friend Michael caught a glimpse of it, and exclaimed, "I pr'ythee, Adam Woodcock, what hast thou been doing with these eyes of thine? They are swelled to the starting from the hool!"

"Nought in the world," said he, after casting a deprecating glance at Roland Græme, "but the effect of sleeping in this d——d truckle, without a pillow."

"Why, Adam Woodcock, thou art grown strangely dainty," said his old companion; "I have known thee sleep all night with no better pillow than a bush of ling, and start up with the sun, as glegg as a falcon; and now thine eyes resemble"——

"Tush, man, what signifies how mine eyes look now?" said Adam—"let us but roast a crab-apple, pour a pottle of ale on it, and bathe our throats withal, thou shalt see a change in me."

"And thou wilt be in heart to sing thy jolly ballad about the pope," said his comrade.

"Ay, that I will," replied the falconer, "that is, when we have left this quiet town five miles behind us, if you will take your hobby and ride so far on my way."

"Nay, that I may not," said Michael—"I can but stop to partake your morning's draught, and see you fairly to horse—I will see that they saddle them, and toast the crab for thee, without loss of time."

During his absence the falconer took the page by the hand—"May I never hood hawk again," said the good-natured fellow, "if I am not as sorry to part with you as if you were a child of mine own, craving pardon for the freedom—I cannot tell what makes me love you so much, unless it be

for the reason that I loved the vicious devil of a brown galloway nag, whom my master the Knight called Satan, till Master Warden changed his name to Seyton; for, he said, it was over boldness to call a beast after the King of Darkness"——

"And," said the page, "it was over boldness in him, I trow, to call a vicious brute after a noble family."

"Well," proceeded Adam, "Seyton or Satan, I loved that nag over every other horse in the stable—There was no sleeping on his back—he was for ever fidgetting, bolting, rearing, biting, kicking, and giving you work to do, and may be the measure of your back on the heather to the boot of it all. And I think I love you better than any lad in the castle, for the self-same qualities."

"Thanks, thanks, kind Adam. I hold myself bound to you for the good estimation in which you hold me."

"Nay, interrupt me not," said the falconer—"Satan was a good nag—But I say I think I shall call the two eyasses after you, the one Roland, and the other Græme;

and, while Adam Woodcock lives, be sure you have a friend—Here is to thee, my dear son."

Roland most heartily returned the grasp of the hand, and Woodcock, having taken a deep draught, continued his farewell speech.

"There are three things I warn you against, Roland, now that you are to tread this weary world without my experience to assist you. In the first place, never draw dagger on slight occasion — every man's doublet is not so well stuffed as a certain abbot's that you wot of. Secondly, fly not at every pretty girl, like a merlin at a thrush —you will not always win a gold chain for your labour—and, by the way, here I re-return to you your fanfarona—keep it close, it is weighty, and may benefit you at a pinch more ways than one. Thirdly, and to conclude, as our worthy preacher says, beware of the pottle-pot—it has drenched the judgment of wiser men than you. I could bring some instances of it, but I dare

say it needeth not; for if you should forget your own mishaps, you will scarce fail to remember mine—And so farewell, my dear son."

Roland returned his good wishes, and failed not to send his humble duty to his kind Lady, charging the falconer, at the same time, to express his regret that he should have offended her, and his determination so to bear him in the world that she would not be ashamed of the generous protection she had afforded him.

The falconer embraced his young friend, mounted his stout, round-made, trotting nag, which the serving man, who had attended him, held ready at the door, and took the road to the southward. A sullen and heavy sound echoed from the horse's feet, as if indicating the sorrow of the good-natured rider. Every hoof-tread seemed to tap upon Roland's heart as he heard his comrade withdraw with so little of his usual alert activity, and felt that he was once more alone in the world.

He was roused from his reverie by Michael Wing-the-wind, who reminded him that it was necessary they should instantly return to the palace, as my Lord Regent went to the Sessions early in the morning. They went thither accordingly, and Wing-the-wind, a favourite old domestic, who was admitted nearer to the Regent's person and privacy, than many whose posts were more ostensible, soon introduced Græme into a small matted chamber, where he had an audience of the present head of the troubled State of Scotland. The Earl of Murray was clad in a sad-coloured morning-gown, with a cap and slippers of the same cloth, but, even in this easy dishabille, held his sheathed rapier in his hand, a precaution which he adopted when receiving strangers, rather in compliance with the earnest remonstrances of his friends and partizans, than from any personal apprehensions of his own. He answered with a silent nod the respectful obeisance of the page, and took one or two turns through the small apartment in silence, fixing his keen eye on Roland, as if

he wished to penetrate into his very soul. At length he broke silence.

"Your name is, I think, Julian Græme."

"Roland Græme, my lord, not Julian," replied the page.

"Right—I was misled by some trick of my memory—Roland Græme, from the Debateable Land.—Roland, thou knowest the duties which belong to a lady's service?"

"I should know them, my lord," replied Roland, "having been bred so near the person of my Lady of Avenel; but I trust never more to practise them, as the Knight hath promised"——

"Be silent, young man," said the Regent, "I am to speak, and you to hear and to obey. It is necessary that, for some space at least, you shall again enter into the service of a lady, who, in rank, hath no equal in Scotland; and this service accomplished, I give thee my word as Knight and Prince, that it shall open to you a course of ambition, such as may well gratify the aspiring wishes of one whom circumstances entitle

to entertain much higher views than thou. I will take thee into my household and near to my person, or, at your own choice, I will give you the command of a foot-company—either is a preferment which the proudest laird in the land might be glad to assure to a second son."

"May I presume to ask, my lord," said Roland, observing the Earl paused for a reply, "to whom my poor services are in the first place destined?"

"You will be told hereafter," said the Regent; and then, as if overcoming some internal reluctance to speak further himself, he added, "or why should I not myself tell you, that you are about to enter into the service of a most illustrious—most unhappy lady—into the service of Mary of Scotland."

"Of the Queen, my lord!" said the page, unable to repress his surprise.

"Of her who was the Queen!" said Murray, with a singular mixture of displeasure and embarrassment in his tone of voice.

"You must be aware, young man, that her son reigns in her stead."

He sighed from an emotion, partly perhaps natural, and partly assumed.

"And am I to attend upon her Grace in her place of imprisonment, my lord?" again demanded the page, with a straight-forward and hardy simplicity, which somewhat disconcerted the sage and powerful statesman.

"She is not imprisoned," answered Murray, angrily; "God forbid she should—she is only sequestrated from state affairs, and from the business of the public, until the world be so effectually settled, that she may enjoy her natural and uncontrouled freedom, without her royal disposition being exposed to the practices of wicked and designing men. It is for this purpose," he added, "that while she is to be furnished, as right is, with such attendance as may befit her present secluded state, it becomes necessary that those placed around her, are persons on whose prudence I can have reliance. You see, therefore, you are at once

called on to discharge an office most honourable in itself, and so to discharge it that you may make a friend of the Regent of Scotland. Thou art, I have been told, a singularly apprehensive youth; and I perceive by thy look, that thou doest already understand what I would say on this matter. In this schedule your particular points of duty are set down at length—but the sum required of you is fidelity—I mean fidelity to myself and to the state. You are, therefore, to watch every attempt which is made or inclination displayed, to open any communication with any of the lords who have become banders in the west—with Hamilton, with Seyton, with Fleming, or the like. It is true that my gracious sister, reflecting upon the ill chances that have happed to the state of this poor kingdom, from evil counsellors who have abused her royal nature in time past, hath determined to sequestrate herself from state affairs in future. But it is our duty, as acting for and in name of our infant nephew, to guard against the evils which may arise from any mutation or va-

cillation in her royal resolutions. Wherefore it will be thy duty to watch, and report to our lady mother, whose guest our sister is for the present, whatever may infer a disposition to withdraw her person from the place of security in which she is lodged, or to open communication with those without. If, however, your observation should detect any thing of weight, and which may exceed mere suspicion, fail not to send notice by an especial messenger to me directly, and this ring shall be thy warrant to order horse and man on such service.—And now begone. If there be half the wit in thy head that there is apprehension in thy look, thou fully comprehendest all that I would say—Serve me faithfully, and sure as I am belted earl, thy reward shall be great."

Roland Græme made an obeisance, and was about to depart.

The Earl signed to him to remain. "I have trusted thee deeply," he said, "young man, for thou art the only one of her suite who has been sent to her by my own recommendation. Her gentlewomen are of her

own nomination—it were too hard to have barred her that privilege, though some there were who reckoned it inconsistent with sure policy. Thou art young and handsome. Mingle in their follies, and see they cover not deeper designs under the appearance of female levity—if they do mine, do thou countermine. For the rest, bear all decorum and respect to the person of thy mistress—she is a princess though a most unhappy one, and hath been a queen, though now, alas! no longer such—Pay, therefore, to her all honour and respect, consistent with thy fidelity to the King and me—and now, farewell.—Yet stay—you travel with Lord Lindesay, a man of the old world, rough and honest, though untaught; see that thou offend him not, for he is not patient of raillery, and thou, I have heard, art a crack-halter." This he said with a smile, then added, "I could have wished the Lord Lindesay's mission had been entrusted to some other and more gentle noble."

"And wherefore should you wish that,

my lord?" said Morton, who even then entered the apartment; "the council have decided for the best—we have had but too many proofs of this lady's stubbornness of mind, and the oak that resists the sharp steel axe, must be riven with the rugged iron wedge. And this is to be her page?—My Lord Regent hath doubtless instructed you, young man, how you shall guide yourself in these matters; I will add but a little hint on my part. You are going to the castle of a Douglas, where treachery never thrives—the first moment of suspicion will be the last of your life. My kinsman, William Douglas, understands no raillery, and if he once have cause to think you false, you will waver in the wind from the castle battlements ere the sun set upon his anger.—And is the lady to have an almoner withal?"

"Occasionally, Douglas," said the Regent; "it were hard to deny the spiritual consolation which she thinks essential to her salvation."

"You are ever too soft-hearted, my lord

—What, a false priest to communicate her lamentations, not only to our unfriends in Scotland, but to the Guises, to Rome, to Spain, and I know not where!"

"Fear not," said the Regent, "we will take such order that no treachery shall happen."

"Look to it then," said Morton; "you know my mind respecting the wench you have consented she shall receive as a waiting-woman—one of a family, which, of all others, has ever been devoted to her, and inimical to us. Had we not been wary, she would have been purveyed of a page as much to her purpose as her waiting damsel. I hear a rumour that an old mad Romish pilgrimer, who passes for at least half a saint among them, was employed to find a fit subject."

"We have escaped that danger at least," said Murray, "and converted it into a point of advantage, by sending this boy of Glendinning's—and for her waiting damsel, you cannot grudge her one poor maiden instead

of her four noble Maries, and all their silken train."

"I care not so much for the waiting maiden," said Morton, "but I cannot brook the almoner—I think priests of all persuasions are much like each other—Here is John Knox, who made such a noble puller-down, is ambitious of becoming a setter-up, and a founder of schools and colleges out of the Abbey lands, and bishop's rents, and other spoils of Rome, which the nobility of Scotland have won with their sword and bow, and with which he would nowendow new hives to sing the old drone."

"John is a man of God," said the Regent, "and his scheme is a devout imagination."

The sedate smile with which this was spoken, left it impossible to conjecture whether the words were meant in approbation, or in derision, of the plan of the Scottish Reformer. Turning then to Roland Græme, as if he thought he had been long enough a witness of this conversation, he

bade him get him presently to horse, since my Lord of Lindesay was already mounted. The page made his reverence, and left the apartment.

Guided by Michael Wing-the-wind, he found his horse ready saddled and prepared for the journey in front of the palace porch, where hovered about a score of men-at-arms, whose leader shewed no small symptoms of surly impatience.

"Is this the jackanape page for whom we have waited this long?" said he to Wing-the-wind. "And my Lord Ruthven will reach the castle long before us."

Michael assented, and added that the boy had been detained by the Regent to receive some parting instructions. The leader made an inarticulate sound in his throat, expressive of sullen acquiesence, and calling to one of his domestic attendants, "Eward," said he, "take the gallant into your charge, and let him speak with no one else."

He then addressed, by the title of Sir Robert, an elderly and respectable looking

gentleman, the only one of the party who seemed above the rank of a retainer or domestic, and observed that they must get to horse with all speed.

During this discourse, and while they were riding slowly along the street of the suburb, Roland had time to examine more accurately the looks and figure of the Baron, who was at their head.

Lord Lindesay of the Byres was rather touched than stricken with years. His upright stature and strong limbs still shewed him fully equal to all the exertions and fatigues of war. His thick eye-brows, now partially grizzled, lowered over large eyes full of dark fire, which seemed yet darker from the uncommon depth at which they were set in his head. His features, naturally strong and harsh, had their sternness exaggerated by one or two scars received in battle. These features, naturally calculated to express the harsher passions, were shaded by an open steel cap, with a projecting front, but having no visor, over the gorget of which fell the black and grizzled beard of the grim

old Baron, and totally hid the lower part of his face. The rest of his dress was a loose buff-coat, which had once been lined with silk and adorned with embroidery, but which seemed much stained with travel, and damaged with cuts, received probably in battle. It covered a corslet, which had once been of polished steel, fairly gilded, but was now somewhat injured with rust. A sword of antique make and uncommon size, framed to be wielded with both hands, a kind of weapon which was then beginning to go out of use, hung from his neck in a baldrick, and was so disposed as to traverse his whole person—the huge hilt appearing over his left shoulder, and the point reaching well nigh to the right heel, and jarring against his spur as he walked. This unwieldy weapon could only be unsheathed by pulling the handle over the left shoulder—for no human arm was long enough to draw it in the usual manner. The whole equipment was that of a rude warrior, negligent of his exterior even to misanthropi-

cal sullenness; and the short, harsh, haughty tone, which he used towards his attendants, belonged to the same unpolished character.

The personage who rode with Lord Lindesay, at the head of the party, was an absolute contrast to him, in manner, form, and features. His thin and silky hair was already white, though he seemed not above forty-five or fifty years old. His tone of voice was soft and insinuating—his form thin, spare, and bent by a habitual stoop—his pale cheek was expressive of shrewdness and intelligence—his eye was quick though placid, and his whole demeanour mild and conciliatory. He rode an ambling nag, such as were used by ladies, clergymen, or others of peaceful professions—wore a riding habit of black velvet, with a cap and feather of the same hue, fastened up by a golden medal—and for show, and as a mark of rank rather than for use, carried a walking sword, (as the short light rapiers were called) without any other arms offensive or defensive.

The party had now quitted the town, and proceeded, at a steady trot, towards the westward. As they prosecuted their journey, Roland Græme would gladly have learned something of its purpose and tendence, but the countenance of the personage next to whom he had been placed in the train, discouraged all approach to familiarity. The Baron himself did not look more grim and inaccessible than his feudal retainer, whose grizzly beard fell over his mouth like the portcullis before the gate of a castle, as if for the purpose of preventing the escape of any word, of which absolute necessity did not demand the utterance. The rest of the train seemed under the same taciturn influence, and journeyed on without a word being exchanged amongst them—more like a troop of Carthusian friars than a party of military retainers. Roland Græme was surprised at this extremity of discipline; for even in the household of the Knight of Avenel, though somewhat distinguished for the accuracy with which

decorum was enforced, a journey was a period of licence, during which jest and song, and every thing within the limits of becoming mirth and pastime, was freely permitted. This unusual silence was, however, so far acceptable, that it gave him time to bring any shadow of judgment which he possessed to council on his own situation and prospects, which would have appeared to any reasonable person in the highest degree dangerous and perplexing.

It was quite evident that he had, through various circumstances not under his own controul, formed contradictory connexions with both the contending factions, by whose strife the kingdom was distracted, without being properly an adherent of either. It seemed also clear, that the same situation in the household of the deposed Queen, to which he was now promoted by the influence of the Regent, had been destined to him by his enthusiastic grandmother, Magdalen Græme; for on this subject, the words which Morton had dropped had been a ray

of light; yet it was no less clear that these two persons, the one the declared enemy, the other the enthusiastic votary, of the Catholic religion;—the one at the head of the King's new government, the other, who regarded that government as a criminal usurpation, must have required and expected very different services from the individual whom they had thus united in recommending. It required very little reflection to foresee that these contradictory claims on his services might speedily place him in a situation where his honour as well as his life might be endangered. But it was not in Roland Græme's nature to anticipate evil before it came, or to prepare to combat difficulties before they arrived. "I will see this beautiful and unfortunate Mary Stuart," said he, "of whom we have heard so much, and then there will be time enough to determine whether I will be kingsman or queensman. None of them can say I have given word or promise to either of their factions; for they have led me up and down like a

blind Billy, without giving me any light into what I was to do. But it was lucky that grim Douglas came into the Regent's closet this morning, otherwise I had never got free of him without plighting my troth to do all the Earl would have me, which seemed, after all, but foul play to the poor imprisoned lady, to place her page as an espial on her."

Skipping thus lightly over a matter of such consequence, the thoughts of the hair-brained boy went a wool-gathering after more agreeable topics. Now, he admired the Gothic towers of Barnbougle, rising from the sea-beaten rock, and overlooking one of the most glorious landscapes in Scotland—and now he began to consider what notable sport for the hounds and the hawks must be afforded by the variegated ground over which they travelled—and now he compared the steady and dull trot at which they were then prosecuting their journey, with the delight of sweeping over hill and dale in pursuit of his favourite sports. As,

under influence of these joyous recollections, he gave his horse the spur, and made him execute a gambade, he instantly incurred the censure of his grave neighbour, who hinted to him to keep the pace, and move quietly and in order, unless he wished such notice to be taken of his eccentric movements as was likely to be very displeasing to him.

The rebuke and the restraint under which the youth now found himself, brought back to his recollection his late good-humoured and accommodating associate and guide, Adam Woodcock; and from that topic his imagination made a short flight to Avenel Castle, to the quiet and unconfined life of its inhabitants, the goodness of his early protectress, not forgetting the denizens of its stables, kennels, and hawk-mews. In a brief space, all these subjects of meditation gave way to the remembrance of that riddle of womankind, Catherine Seyton, who appeared before the eye of his mind—now in her female form—now in her male attire—now

in both at once—like some strange dream, which presents to us the same individual under two different characters at the same instant. Her mysterious present also recurred to his recollection—the sword which he now wore at his side, and which he was not to draw, save by command of his legitimate Sovereign! But the key of this mystery he judged he was likely to find in the issue of his present journey.

With such thoughts passing through his mind, Roland Græme accompanied the party of Lord Lindesay to the Queen's-Ferry, which they passed in vessels that lay in readiness for them. They encountered no adventure whatsoever in their passage, excepting one horse being lamed in getting into the boat, an incident very common on such occasions, until a few years ago, when the Ferry was completely regulated. What was more peculiarly characteristic of the olden age, was the discharge of a culverin at the party from the battlements of the old castle of Rosythe, on the

north side of the Ferry, the lord of which happened to have some public or private quarrel with the Lord Lindesay, and took this mode of expressing his resentment. The insult, however, as it was harmless, remained unnoticed and unavenged, nor did anything else occur worth notice until the band had come where Lochleven spread its magnificent sheet of waters to the beams of a bright summer sun.

The ancient castle, which occupies an island nearly in the centre of the lake, recalled to the page that of Avenel, in which he had been nurtured. But the lake was much larger, and adorned with several islets besides that on which the fortress was situated; and instead of being embosomed in hills like that of Avenel, had upon the southern side only a splendid mountainous screen, being the descent of one of the Lomond hills, and on the other was surrounded by the extensive and fertile plain of Kinross. Roland Græme looked with some degree of dismay on the water-girdled for-

tress, which then, as now, consisted only of one large Donjon-keep, surrounded with a court-yard, with two round flanking-towers at the angles, which contained within its circuit some other buildings of inferior importance. A few old trees clustered together, near the castle, gave some relief to the air of desolate seclusion; but yet the page, while he gazed upon a building so sequestered, could not but feel for the situation of a captive Princess doomed to dwell there, as well as for his own. I must have been born, he thought, under the star that presides over ladies and lakes of water, for I cannot by any means escape from the service of the one or from dwelling in the other. But if they allow me not the fair freedom of my sport and exercise, they shall find it as hard to confine a wild-drake, as a youth who can swim like one.

The band had now reached the edge of the water, and one of the party advancing displayed Lord Lindesay's pennon, waving it repeatedly to and fro, while that Baron

himself blew a clamorous blast on his bugle. A banner was presently displayed from the roof of the castle in reply to these signals, and one or two figures were seen busied as if unmooring a boat which lay close to the islet.

"It will be some time ere they can reach us with the boat," said the companion of the Lord Lindsay; "should we not do well to proceed to the town, and array ourselves in some better order, ere we appear before"——

"You may do as you list, Sir Robert," replied Lindesay, "I have neither time nor temper to waste on such vanities. She has cost me many a hard ride, and must not now take offence at the thread-bare cloak and soiled doublet that I am arrayed in. It is the livery to which she has brought all Scotland."

"Do not speak so harshly," said Sir Robert; "if she hath done wrong, she hath dearly abied it; and in losing all real power,

one would not deprive her of the little external homage due at once to a lady and a princess."

"I say to you once more, Sir Robert Melville," replied Lindesay, "do as you will—for me, I am now too old to drink myself as a gallant to grace the bower of dames."

"The bower of dames, my lord!" said Melville, looking at the rude old tower —"is it yon dark and grated castle, the prison of a captive Queen, to which you give so gay a name?"

"Name it as you list," replied Lindesay; "had the Regent desired to send an envoy capable to speak to a captive Queen, there are many gallants in his court who would have courted the occasion to make speeches out of Amadis of Gaul, or the Mirror of Knighthood. But when he sent blunt old Lindesay, he knew he would speak to a misguided woman, as her former misdoings and her present state render necessary. I sought not this employment—it has been thrust

upon me; and I will not cumber myself with more form in the discharge of it, than needs must be tacked to such an occupation."

So saying, Lord Lindesay threw himself from horseback, and, wrapping his riding-cloak around him, lay down at lazy length upon the sward to await the arrival of the boat, which was now seen rowing from the castle toward the shore. Sir Robert Melville, who had also dismounted, walked at short turns to and fro upon the bank, his arms crossed on his breast, often looking to the castle, and displaying in his countenance a mixture of sorrow and of anxiety. The rest of the party sate like statues on horseback, without moving so much as the points of their lances, which they held upright in the air.

As soon as the boat approached a rude quay or landing-place, near to which they had stationed themselves, Lord Lindesay started up from his recumbent posture, and asked the person who steered, why he had

not brought a larger boat with him to transport his retinue.

"So please you," replied the boatman, "because it is the order of our lady, that we bring not to the castle more than four persons."

"Thy lady is a wise woman," said Lindesay, "to suspect me of treachery!—Or, had I intended it, what is to hinder us from throwing you and your comrades into the lake, and filling the boat with my own fellows?"

The steersman, on hearing this, made a hasty signal to his men to back their oars, and hold off from the shore which they were approaching.

"Why, thou ass," said Lindesay, "thou didst not think that I meant thy fool's head serious harm? Hark thee, friend—with fewer than three servants I will go no whither—Sir Robert Melville will require at least the attendance of one domestic; and it will be at your peril and your lady's

to refuse us admission, come hither as we are on matters of great national concern."

The steersman answered with firmness, but with great civility of expression, that his orders were positive to bring no more than four into the island, but he offered to row back to obtain a revisal of his orders.

"Do so, my friend," said Sir Robert Melville, after he had in vain endeavoured to persuade his stubborn companion to consent to a temporary abatement of his train, "row back to the castle, sith it will be no better, and obtain thy lady's orders to transport the Lord Lindesay, myself, and our retinue hither."

"And hearken," said Lord Lindesay, "take with you this page who comes as an attendant on your lady's guest.—Dismount, sirrah," said he, addressing Roland, "and embark with them in that boat."

"And what is to become of my horse?" said Græme; "I am answerable for him to my master."

"I will relieve you of the charge," said

Lindesay; "thou wilt have little enow to do with horses for ten years to come."

"If I thought so," said Roland—but he was interrupted by Sir Robert Melville, who said to him good-humouredly, "Dispute it not, young friend—resistance can do no good, but may well run thee into danger."

Roland Græme felt the justice of what he said, and, though neither delighted with the matter nor manner of Lindesay's address, deemed it best to submit to necessity, and to embark without further remonstrance. The men plied their oars. The quay, with the party of horse stationed near it, receded from the page's eyes—the castle and the islet seemed to draw near in the same proportion, and in a brief space he landed under the shadow of a huge old tree which overhung the landing-place. The steersman and Græme leaped ashore; the boatmen remained lying on their oars ready for further service.

CHAPTER VI.

Could valour aught avail or people's love,
France had not wept Navarre's brave Henry slain;
If wit or beauty could compassion move,
The Rose of Scotland had not wept in vain.
Elegy in a Royal Mausoleum.—LEWIS.

AT the gate of the court-yard of Lochleven appeared the stately form of the Lady of Lochleven, a female whose early charms had captivated James V., by whom she became mother of the celebrated Regent Murray. As she was of noble birth (being a daughter of the House of Mar) and of great beauty, her intercourse with James did not prevent her being afterwards sought in honourable marriage by many gallants of the time, among whom she had

preferred Sir William Douglas of Lochleven. But well has it been said,

> ———Our pleasant vices
> Are made the whips to scourge us—

The station which the Lady of Lochleven now held as the wife of a man of high rank and interest, and the mother of a lawful family, did not prevent her nourishing a painful sense of degradation, even while she was proud of the talents, the power, and the station of her son, now prime ruler of the state, but still a pledge of her illicit intercourse. Had James done to her (she said in her secret heart) the justice he owed her, she had seen in her son, as a source of unmixed delight and of unchastened pride, the lawful monarch of Scotland, and one of the ablest who ever swayed the sceptre. The House of Mar, not inferior in antiquity or grandeur to that of Drummond, would then have also boasted a Queen amongst its daughters, and escaped the stain attached to female frailty, even when it has a royal lover for its apology. While such feelings

preyed on a bosom naturally proud and severe, they had a corresponding effect on her countenance, where, with the remains of great beauty, were mingled traits indicative of inward discontent and peevish melancholy. It perhaps contributed to increase this habitual temperament, that the Lady Lochleven had adopted uncommonly rigid and severe views of religion, imitating in her ideas of reformed faith the very worst errors of the Catholics, in limiting the benefit of the gospel to those who profess their own speculative tenets.

In every respect, the unfortunate Queen Mary, now the compulsory guest, or rather prisoner of this sullen lady, was obnoxious to her hostess. Lady Lochleven disliked her as the daughter of Mary of Guise, the legal possessor of those rights over James's heart and hand, of which she conceived herself to have been injuriously deprived; and yet more so as the professor of a religion which she detested worse than Paganism.

Such was the dame, who, with stately

mien, and sharp yet handsome features, shrouded by her black velvet coif, interrogated the domestic who steered her barge to the shore, what had become of Lindesay and Sir Robert Melville. The man related what had passed, and she smiled scornfully as she replied, "Fools must be flattered, not foughten with.—Row back—make thy excuse as thou canst—say Lord Ruthven hath already reached this castle, and that he is impatient for Lord Lindesay's presence. Away with thee, Randal—yet stay—what galopin is that thou hast brought hither?"

"So please you, my lady, he is the page who is to wait upon——"

"Ay, the new male minion," said the Lady Lochleven; "the female attendant arrived yesterday. I shall have a well-ordered house with this lady and her retinue; but I trust they will soon find some others to undertake such a charge. Begone, Randal—and you (to Roland Græme) follow me to the garden."

She led the way with a slow and stately

step to the small garden, which, enclosed by a stone wall ornamented with statues, and an artificial fountain in the centre, extended its dull parterres on the side of the court-yard, with which it communicated by a low and arched portal. Within the narrow circuit of its formal and limited walks, Mary Stuart was now learning to perform the weary part of a prisoner, which, with little interval, she was doomed to sustain during the remainder of her life. She was followed in her slow and melancholy exercise by two female attendants; but in the first glance which Roland Græme bestowed upon one so illustrious by birth, so distinguished by her beauty, accomplishments, and misfortunes, he was sensible of the presence of no other than the unhappy Queen of Scotland.

Her face, her form, have been so deeply impressed upon the imagination, that, even at the distance of nearly three centuries, it is unnecessary to remind the most ignorant and uninformed reader of the striking traits which

characterize that remarkable countenance, which seems at once to combine our ideas of the majestic, the pleasing, and the brilliant, leaving us to doubt whether they express most happily the queen, the beauty, or the accomplished woman. Who is there, at the very mention of Mary Stuart's name, that has not her countenance before him, familiar as that of the mistress of his youth, or the favourite daughter of his advanced age? Even those who feel themselves compelled to believe all, or much of what her enemies laid to her charge, cannot think without a sigh upon a countenance expressive of anything rather than the foul crimes with which she was charged when living, and which still continue to shade, if not to blacken her memory. That brow, so truly open and regal—those eye-brows, so regularly graceful, which yet were saved from the charge of regular insipidity by the beautiful effect of the hazel eyes which they overarched, and which seem to utter a thousand histories—the nose, with

all its Grecian precision of outline—the mouth, so well proportioned, so sweetly formed, as if designed to speak nothing but what was delightful to hear—the dimpled chin—the stately swanlike neck, form a countenance, the like of which we know not to have existed in any other character moving in that high class of life, where the actresses as well as the actors command general and undivided attention. It is in vain to say that the portraits which exist of this remarkable woman are not like each other; for, amidst their discrepancy, each possesses general features which the eye at once acknowledges as peculiar to the vision which our imagination has raised while we read her history for the first time, and which has been impressed upon it by the numerous prints and pictures which we have seen. Indeed we cannot look on the worst of them, however deficient in point of execution, without saying that it is meant for Queen Mary; and no small instance it is of the power of beauty, that her charms

should have remained the subject not merely of admiration, but of warm and chivalrous interest, after the lapse of such a length of time. We know that by far the most acute of those who, in latter days, have adopted the unfavourable view of Mary's character, longed, like the executioner before his dreadful task was performed, to kiss the fair hand of her on whom he was about to perform so horrible a duty.

Dressed, then, in a deep mourning robe, and with all those charms of face, shape, and manner, with which faithful tradition has made each reader familiar, Mary Stuart advanced to meet the Lady of Lochleven, who, on her part, endeavoured to conceal dislike and apprehension under the appearance of respectful indifference. The truth was, that she had experienced repeatedly the Queen's superiority in that species of disguised yet cutting sarcasm, with which women can successfully avenge themselves, for real and substantial injuries. It may be well doubted, whether this talent was not as fatal to

its possessor as the many others enjoyed by that highly gifted, but most unhappy female; for, while it often afforded her a momentary triumph over her keepers, it failed not to exasperate their resentment; and the satire and sarcasm in which she had indulged, were frequently retaliated by the deep and bitter hardships which they had the power of inflicting. It is well known that her death was at length hastened by a letter which she wrote to Queen Elizabeth, in which she treated her jealous rival, and the Countess of Shrewsbury, with the keenest irony and ridicule.

As the ladies met together, the Queen said, bending her head at the same time in return to the obeisance of the Lady Lochleven, " We are this day fortunate—we enjoy the company of our amiable hostess at an unusual hour, and during a period which we have hitherto been permitted to give to our private exercise. But our good hostess knows well she has at all times access to our presence, and need not observe

the useless ceremony of requiring our permission."

"I am sorry my presence is deemed an intrusion by your Grace," said the Lady of Lochleven. "I came but to announce the arrival of an addition to your train," motioning with her hand towards Roland Græme; "a circumstance towards which ladies are seldom indifferent."

"O! I crave your ladyship's pardon; and am bent to the earth with obligation for the kindness of my nobles,—or my sovereigns shall I call them?—who have permitted me such a respectable addition to my personal retinue."

"They have indeed studied, madam," said the Lady of Lochleven, "to shew their kindness toward your Grace—something at the risk perhaps of sound policy, and I trust their doings will not be misconstrued."

"Impossible!" said the Queen; "the bounty which permits the daughter of so many kings, and who yet is Queen of the

realm, the attendance of two waiting-women and a boy, is a grace which Mary Stuart can never sufficiently acknowledge. Why! my train will be equal to that of any country-dame in this your kingdom of Fife, saving but the lack of a gentleman-usher, and two blue-coated serving-men. But I must not forget, in my selfish joy, the additional trouble and charges to which this augmentation of our train will put our kind hostess, and the whole house of Lochleven. It is this, I am aware, which clouds your brows, my worthy lady. But be of good cheer; the crown of Scotland has many a fair manor, and your affectionate son, and my no less affectionate brother, will endow the good knight your husband with the best of them, ere Mary should be dismissed from this hospitable castle from your ladyship's lack of means to support the charges."

"The Douglases of Lochleven, madam," answered the lady, "have known for ages how to discharge their duty to the State,

without looking for reward, even when the task was both irksome and dangerous."

"Nay! but, my dear Lochleven," said the Queen, "you are over scrupulous—I pray you accept of a goodly manor; what should support the Queen of Scotland in this her princely court, saving her own crown lands—and who should minister to the wants of a mother, save an affectionate son like the Earl of Murray, who possesses so wonderfully both the power and inclination?—Or said you it was the danger of the task which clouded your smooth and hospitable brow?—No doubt, a page is a formidable addition to my body-guard of females; and I bethink me it must have been for that reason that my Lord of Lindesay refused even now to venture within the reach of a force so formidable, without being attended by a competent retinue."

The Lady Lochleven started, and looked something surprised; and Mary, suddenly changing her manner from the smooth iron-

ical affectation of mildness to an accent of austere command, and drawing up at the same time her fine person, said, with the full majesty of her rank, "Yes! Lady of Lochleven; I know that Ruthven is already in the castle, and that Lindesay waits on the bank the return of your barge to bring him hither along with Sir Robert Melville. For what purpose do these nobles come—and why am I not in ordinary decency apprized of their arrival?"

"Their purpose, madam," replied the Lady of Lochleven, "they must themselves explain—but a formal annunciation were needless, where your Grace hath attendants who can play the espial so well."

"Alas! poor Fleming," said the Queen, turning to the elder of the female attendants, "thou wilt be tried, condemned, and gibbetted, for a spy in the garrison, because thou didst chance to cross the great hall while my good Lady of Lochleven was parleying at the full pitch of her voice with her pilot Randal. Put black wool in thy

ears, girl, as you value the wearing of them longer. Remember, in the Castle of Lochleven, ears and tongues are matters not of use, but of show merely. Our good hostess can hear, as well as speak, for us all. —We excuse your further attendance, my lady hostess," she said, once more addressing the object of her resentment, " and retire to prepare for an interview with our rebel lords. We will use the anti-chamber of our sleeping apartment as our hall of audience.—You, young man," she proceeded, addressing Roland Græme, and at once softening the ironical sharpness of her manner into good-humoured raillery, " you, who are all our male attendance, from our Lord High Chamberlain down to our least galopin, follow us to prepare our court."

She turned and walked slowly towards the castle. The Lady of Lochleven folded her arms and smiled in bitter resentment, as she watched her retiring steps.

" Thy whole male attendance !" she muttered, repeating the Queen's last words,

"and well for thee had it been had thy train never been larger;" then turning to Roland, in whose way she had stood while making this pause, she made room for him to pass, saying at the same time, "Art thou already eves-dropping? follow thy mistress, minion, and, if thou wilt, tell her what I have now said."

Roland Græme hastened after his royal mistress and her attendants, who had just entered a postern-gate communicating betwixt the castle and the small garden. They ascended a winding-stair as high as the second storey, which was in a great measure occupied by a suite of three rooms, opening into each other, and assigned as the dwelling of the captive Princess. The outermost was a small hall or outer-room, within which opened a large parlour, and from that again the Queen's bed-room. Another small apartment, which opened into the same parlour, contained the beds of the gentlewomen in waiting.

Roland Græme stepped, as became his station, into the outermost of these apartments, there to await such orders as might be communicated to him. From the grated window of the room he saw Lindesay, Melville, and their followers, disembark; and observed that they were met at the castle gate by a third noble, to whom Lindesay exclaimed, in his loud harsh voice,—" My Lord of Ruthven, you have the start of us!"

At this instant, the page's attention was called to a burst of hysterical sobs from the inner apartment, and to the hurried ejaculations of the terrified females, which led him almost instantly to hasten to their assistance. When he entered, he saw that the Queen had thrown herself into the large chair which stood nearest the door, and was sobbing for breath in a strong fit of hysterical affection. The elder female supported her in her arms, while the younger bathed her face with water and with tears alternately.

" Hasten, young man!" said the elder

lady, in alarm, "fly—call in assistance—she is swooning!"

But the Queen ejaculated in a faint and broken voice, "Stir not, I charge you!—call no one to witness—I am better—I will recover instantly." And, indeed, with an effort which seemed like that of one struggling for life, she sate up in her chair, and endeavoured to resume her composure, while her features yet trembled with the violent emotion of body and mind which she had undergone. "I am ashamed of my weakness, girls," she said, taking the hands of her attendants; "but it is over—and I am Mary Stuart once more. The savage tone of that man's voice—my knowledge of his insolence—the name which he named—the purpose for which they come, may excuse a moment's weakness—and it shall be a moment's only." She snatched from her head the curch or cap, which had been disordered during her hysterical agony—shook down the thick clustered tresses of dark brown which had been before veil-

ed under it—and, drawing her slender fingers across the labyrinth which they formed, she arose from the chair, and stood like the inspired image of a Grecian prophetess, in a mood which partook at once of sorrow and pride, of smiles and of tears. "We are ill appointed," she said, "to meet our rebel subjects; but, as far as we may, we will strive to present ourselves as becomes their Queen. Follow me, my maidens," she said; "what says thy favourite song, my Fleming?

'My maids, come to my dressing bower,
And deck my nut-brown hair;
Where'er ye laid a plait before,
Look ye lay ten times mair.'

Alas!" she added, when she had repeated with a smile these lines of an old ballad, "violence has already robbed me of the ordinary decorations of my rank; and the few that nature gave me have been destroyed by sorrow and by fear." Yet while she spoke thus, she again let her slender fingers stray through the wilderness of the beauti-

ful tresses which veiled her kingly neck and swelling bosom, as if, in her agony of mind, she had not altogether lost the consciousness of her unrivalled charms. Roland Græme, on whose youth, inexperience, and ardent sense of what was dignified and lovely, the demeanour of so fair and high-born a lady, wrought like the charm of a magician, stood rooted to the spot with surprise and interest, longing to hazard his life in a quarrel so fair as that which Mary Stuart's must needs be. She had been bred in France—she was possessed of the most distinguished beauty—she had reigned a Queen, and a Scottish Queen, to whom knowledge of character was as essential as the use of vital air. In all these capacities, Mary was, of all women on the earth, most alert at perceiving and using the advantages which her charms gave her over almost all who came within the sphere of their influence. She cast on Roland a glance which might nave melted a heart of stone. "My poor boy," she said, with a feeling partly real,

partly political, "thou art a stranger to us —sent to this doleful captivity from the society of some tender mother, or sister, or maiden, with whom you had freedom to tread a gay measure round the May-pole. I grieve for you;—but you are the only male in my limited household—wilt thou obey my orders?"

"To the death, madam," said Græme in a determined tone.

"Then, keep the door of mine apartment," said the Queen; "keep it till they offer actual violence, or till we shall be fitly arrayed to receive these intrusive visitors."

"I will defend it till they pass over my body," said Roland Græme; any hesitation which he had felt concerning the line of conduct he ought to pursue, being completely swept away by the impulse of the moment.

"Not so, my good youth," answered Mary; "not so, I command thee. If I have one faithful subject beside me, much need,

God wot, I have to care for his safety. Resist them but till they are put to the shame of using actual violence, and then give way I charge you. Remember my commands." And, with a smile expressive at once of favour and of authority, she turned from him, and, followed by her attendants, entered the bed-room.

The youngest paused for half a second ere she followed her companion, and made a signal to Roland Græme with her hand. He had been already long aware that this was Catherine Seyton—a circumstance which could not much surprise a youth of quick intellects, who recollected the sort of mysterious discourse which had passed betwixt the two matrons at the deserted Nunnery, and on which his meeting with Catherine in this place seemed to cast so much light. Yet such was the engrossing effect of Mary's presence, that it surmounted for the moment even the feelings of a youthful lover; and it was not until Catherine Seyton had disappeared, that Roland began to consider in what relation

they were to stand to each other.—She held up her hand to me in a commanding manner, he thought; perhaps she wanted to confirm my purpose for the execution of the Queen's commands; for I think she could scarce purpose to scare me with the sort of discipline which she administered to freize-jacket, and to poor Adam Woodcock. But we will see to that anon; meantime, let us do justice to the trust reposed in us by this unhappy Queen. I think my Lord of Murray will himself own that it is the duty of a faithful page to defend his lady against intrusion on her privacy.

Accordingly, he stepped to the little vestibule, made fast, with lock and bar, the door which opened from thence to the large stair-case, and then sate himself down to attend the result. He had not long to wait —a rude and strong hand first essayed to lift the latch, then pushed and shook the door with violence, and when it resisted his attempt to open it, exclaimed, "Undo the door there, you within!"

"Why, and at whose command," said the page, "am I to undo the door of the Queen of Scotland?"

Another vain attempt, which made hinge and bolts jingle, shewed that the impatient applicant without would willingly have entered without regarding his challenge; but at length an answer was returned.

"Undo the door, on your peril—the Lord Lindesay comes to speak with the Lady Mary of Scotland."

"The Lord Lindesay, as a Scottish noble," answered the page, "must await his Sovereign's leisure."

An earnest altercation ensued amongst those without, in which Roland distinguished the remarkably harsh voice of Lindesay in reply to Sir Robert Melville, who appeared to have been using some soothing language—"No! no! no! I tell thee no! I will place a petard against the door rather than be baulked by a profligate woman, and bearded by an insolent foot-boy."

"Yet, at least," said Melville, "let me

try fair means in the first instance. Violence to a lady would stain your scutcheon for ever. Or await till my Lord Ruthven comes."

"I will await no longer," said Lindesay; "it is high time the business were done, and we on our return to the council. But thou mayest try thy fair play, as thou callest it, while I cause my train to prepare the petard. I came hither provided with as good gunpowder as blew up the Kirk of Field."

"For God's sake be patient," said Melville; and, approaching the door, he said, as speaking to those within, "Let the Queen know that I, her faithful servant, Robert Melville, do entreat her, for her own sake, and to prevent worse consequence, that she will undo the door, and admit Lord Lindesay, who brings a mission from the Council of State."

"I will do your errand to the Queen," said the page, "and report to you her answer."

He went to the door of the bed-chamber, and tapping against it gently, it was opened by the elder lady, to whom he communicated his errand, and returned with directions from the Queen to admit Sir Robert Melville, and Lord Lindesay. Roland Græme returned to the vestibule, and opened the door accordingly, into which the Lord Lindesay strode, with the air of a soldier who has fought his way into a conquered fortress; while Melville, deeply dejected, followed him more slowly.

"I draw you to witness, and to record," said the page to this last, "that, save for the especial commands of the Queen, I would have made good the entrance, with my best strength, and my best blood, against all Scotland."

"Be silent, young man," said Melville, in a tone of grave rebuke; "add not brands to fire—this is no time to make a flourish of thy boyish chivalry."

"She has not appeared even yet," said Lindesay, who had now reached the midst

of the parlour or audience room; "how call you this trifling?"

"Patience, my lord," replied Sir Robert, "time presses not—and Lord Ruthven hath not as yet descended."

At this moment the door of the inner apartment opened, and Queen Mary presented herself, advancing with an air of peculiar grace and majesty, and seeming totally unruffled, either by the visit, or by the rude manner in which it had been enforced. Her dress was a robe of black velvet; a small ruff, open in front, gave a full view of her beautifully formed chin and neck, but veiled the bosom. On her head she wore a small cap of lace, and a transparent white veil hung from her shoulders over the long black robe, in large loose folds, so that it could be drawn at pleasure over the face and person. She wore a cross of gold around her neck, and had her rosary of gold and ebony hanging from her girdle. She was closely followed by her two ladies, who remained standing behind her during the con-

ference. Even Lord Lindesay, though the rudest noble of that rude age, was surprised into something like respect by the unconcerned and majestic mien of her, whom he had expected to find frantic with impotent passion, or dissolved in useless and vain sorrow, or overwhelmed with the fears likely in such a situation to assail fallen royalty.

"We fear we have detained you, my Lord of Lindesay," said the Queen, while she courtsied with dignity in answer to his reluctant obeisance; "but a female does not willingly receive her visitors without some minutes spent at the toilette. Men, my lord, are less dependant on such ceremonies."

Lord Lindesay, casting his eye down on his own travel-stained and disordered dress, muttered something of a hasty journey, and the Queen paid her greeting to Sir Robert Melville with courtesy, and even, as it seemed, with kindness. There was then a dead pause, during which Lindesay look-

ed towards the door, as if expecting with impatience the colleague of their embassy. The Queen alone was entirely unembarrassed, and, as if to break the silence, she addressed Lord Lindesay, with a glance at the large and cumbrous sword which he wore, as already mentioned, hanging from his neck.

"You have there a trusty and a weighty travelling companion, my lord. I trust you expected to meet with no enemy here, against whom such a formidable weapon could be necessary? It is, methinks, somewhat a singular ornament for a court, though I am, as I well need to be, too much of a Stuart to fear a sword."

"It is not the first time, madam," replied Lindesay, bringing round the weapon so as to rest its point on the ground, and leaning one hand on the huge cross-handle, "it is not the first time that this weapon has intruded itself into the presence of the House of Stuart."

"Possibly, my lord," replied the Queen,

"it may have done service to my ancestors—Your ancestors were men of loyalty."

"Ay, madam," replied he, "service it hath done; but such as kings love neither to acknowledge nor to reward. It was the service which the knife renders to the tree when trimming it to the quick, and depriving it of the superfluous growth of rank and unfruitful suckers, which rob it of nourishment."

"You talk riddles, my lord," said Mary; "I will hope the explanation carries nothing insulting with it."

"You shall judge, madam," answered Lindesay. "With this good sword was Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus, girded on the memorable day when he acquired the name of Bell-the-Cat, for dragging from the presence of your great-grandfather, the third James of the race, a crew of minions, flatterers, and favourites, whom he hanged over the bridge of Lauder, as a warning to such reptiles how they approach a Scottish throne. With this same weapon, the same inflexible champion of Scottish honour and

nobility slew at one blow Spens of Kilspindie, a courtier of your grandfather James the Fourth, who had dared to speak lightly of him in the royal presence. They fought near the brook of Fala; and Bell-the-Cat, with this blade, sheared through the thigh of his opponent, and lopped the limb as easily as a shepherd's boy slices a twig from a sapling."

"My lord," replied the Queen, reddening, "my nerves are too good to be alarmed even by this terrible history—May I ask how a blade so illustrious passed from the House of Douglas to that of Lindesay?—Methinks it should have been preserved as a consecrated relique, by a family who have held all that they could do against their king, to be done in favour of their country."

"Nay, madam," said Melville, anxiously interfering, "ask not that question of Lord Lindesay—And you, my lord, for shame—for decency—forbear to reply to it."

"It is time that this lady should hear the truth," replied Lindesay.

"And be assured that she will be moved to anger by none that you can tell her, my lord. There are cases in which just scorn has always the mastery over just anger."

"Then know," said Lindesay, "that upon the field of Carberry-hill, when that false and infamous traitor and murtherer, James, sometime Earl of Bothwell, and nick-named Duke of Orkney, offered to do personal battle with any of the associated nobles who came to drag him to justice, I accepted his challenge, and was by the noble Earl of Morton gifted with this good sword that I might therewith fight it out—Ah! so help me heaven, had his presumption been one grain more, or his cowardice one grain less, I should have done such work with this good steel on his traitorous corpse, that the hounds and carrion-crows should have found their morsels daintily carved to their use!"

The Queen's courage well nigh gave way to the mention of Bothwell's name—a name connected with such a train of guilt, shame,

and disaster. But the prolonged boast of Lindesay gave her time to rally herself, and to answer with an appearance of cold contempt—" It is easy to slay an enemy who enters not the lists. But had Mary Stuart inherited her father's sword as well as his sceptre, the boldest of her rebels should not upon that day have complained that they had no one to cope withal. Your lordship will forgive me if I abridge this conference. A brief description of a bloody fight is long enough to satisfy a lady's curiosity; and unless my Lord of Lindesay has something more important to tell us than of the deeds which old Bell-the-Cat achieved, and how he would himself have emulated them, had time and tide permitted, we will retire to our private apartment, and you, Fleming, shall finish reading to us yonder little treatise Des Rhodomantades Espagnolles."

" Tarry, madam," said Lindesay, his complexion reddening in his turn; " I know your quick wit too well of old to have sought

an interview that you might sharpen its edge at the expence of my honour. Lord Ruthven and myself, with Sir Robert Melville as a concurrent, come to your Grace on the part of the Secret Council, to tender to you what much concerns the safety of your own life and the welfare of the State."

"The Secret Council?" said the Queen; "by what powers can it subsist or act, while I, from whom it holds its character, am here detained under unjust restraint? But it matters not—what concerns the welfare of Scotland shall be acceptable to Mary Stuart, come from whatsoever quarter it will—and for what concerns her own life, she has lived long enough to be weary of it, even at the age of twenty-five.—Where is your colleague, my lord—why tarries he?"

"He comes, madam," said Melville, and Lord Ruthven entered at the instant, holding in his hand a packet. As the Queen returned his salutation she became deadly pale, but instantly recovered herself by dint of strong and sudden resolution, just as the

noble, whose appearance seemed to excite such emotions in her bosom, entered the apartment in company with George Douglas, the youngest son of the Knight of Lochleven, who, during the absence of his father and brethren, acted as Seneschal of the Castle, under the direction of the elder Lady Lochleven, his father's mother.

CHAPTER VII.

I give this heavy weight from off my head,
And this unwieldy sceptre from my hand;
With mine own tears I wash away my balm,
With my own hand I give away my crown,
With mine own tongue deny my sacred state,
With mine own breath release all duteous oaths.

Richard II.

Lord Ruthven had the look and bearing which became a soldier and a statesman, and the martial cast of his form and features, procured him the popular epithet of Greysteil, by which he was distinguished by his intimates, after the hero of a metrical romance then generally known. His dress, which was a buff-coat embroidered, had a half-military character, but exhibited nothing of the sordid negligence which distinguished that of Lindesay. But the son of an ill-fated sire, and the father of a yet

more unfortunate family, bore in his look that cast of inauspicious melancholy, by which the physiognomists of that time pretended to distinguish those who were predestined to a violent and unhappy death.

The terror which the presence of this nobleman impressed on the Queen's mind, arose from the active share he had borne in the slaughter of David Rizzio; his father having presided at the perpetration of that abominable crime, although so weak from long and wasting illness, that he could not endure the weight of his armour, having arisen from a sick-bed to commit a murther in the presence of his Sovereign. On that occasion, his son also had attended and taken an active part. It was little to be wondered at that the Queen, considering her condition when such a deed of horror was acted in her presence, should retain an instinctive terror for the principal actors in the murther. She returned, however, with grace the salutation of Lord Ruthven, and extended her hand

to George Douglas, who kneeled and kissed it with respect; the first mark of a subject's homage which Roland Græme had seen any of them render to the captive Sovereign. She returned his greeting in silence, and there was a brief pause, during which the steward of the castle, a man of a sad brow and a severe eye, placed, under George Douglas's directions, a table and writing materials; and the page, obedient to his mistress's dumb signal, advanced a large chair to the side on which the Queen stood, the table thus forming a sort of bar which divided the Queen and her personal followers from her unwelcome visitors. The steward then withdrew after a low reverence. When he had closed the door behind him, the Queen broke silence—" With your favour, my lords, I will sit—my walks are not indeed extensive enough at present to fatigue me greatly, yet I find repose something more necessary than usual."

She sate down accordingly, and shading her cheek with her beautiful hand, looked

keenly and impressively at each of the nobles in turn. Mary Fleming applied her kerchief to her eyes, and Catherine Seyton and Roland Græme exchanged a glance, which showed that both were too deeply engrossed with sentiments of interest and commiseration for their royal mistress, to think of any thing which regarded themselves.

"I wait your business, my lords," said the Queen, after she had been seated for about a minute without a word being spoken,—"I wait your message from those you call the Secret Council.—I trust it is a petition of pardon, and a desire that I will resume my rightful throne, without using with due severity my right of punishing those who have dispossessed me of it."

"Madam," replied Ruthven, "it is painful for us to speak harsh truths to a Princess who has long ruled us. But we come to offer, not to implore pardon.—In a word, madam, we have to propose to you on the

part of the Secret Council, that you sign these deeds, which will contribute greatly to the pacification of the State, the advancement of God's word, and the welfare of your own future life."

"Am I expected to take these fair words on trust, my lord? or may I hear the contents of these reconciling papers, ere I am asked to sign them."

"Unquestionably, madam; it is our purpose and wish, you should read what you are required to sign," replied Ruthven.

"Required?" replied the Queen with some emphasis; "but the phrase suits well the matter—read, my lord."

The Lord Ruthven proceeded to read a formal instrument, running in the Queen's name, and setting forth that she had been called at an early age to the administration of the crown and realm of Scotland, and had toiled diligently therein, until she was in body and spirit so wearied out and disgusted, that she was unable any longer to endure the travail and pain of State affairs; and

that since God blessed her with a fair and hopeful son, she was desirous to ensure to him, even while she yet lived, his succession to the crown, which was his by right of hereditary descent. "Wherefore," the instrument proceeded, "we, of the motherly affection we bear to our said son, have renounced and demitted, and by these our letters of free good will, renounce and demit the Crown, government, and guiding of the realm of Scotland, in favour of our said son, that he may succeed to us as native Prince thereof, as much as if we had been removed by decease, and not by our own proper act. And that this demission of our royal authority may have the more full and solemn effect, and none pretend ignorance, we give, grant, and commit, full and free and plain power to our trusty cousins, Lord Lindesay of the Byres, and William Lord Ruthven, to appear in our name before as many of the nobility, clergy, and burgesses, as may be assembled at Stirling, and there, in our name and behalf, publicly, and in their pre-

sence, to renounce the Crown, guidance, and government of this our kingdom of Scotland."

The Queen here broke in with an air of extreme surprise. "How is this, my lords?" she said; "Are my ears turned rebels, that they deceive me with sounds so extraordinary?—And yet it is no wonder that, having conversed so long with rebellion, they should now force its language upon my understanding.—Say I am mistaken, my lords—say, for the honour of yourselves and the Scottish nobility, my right trusty cousins of Lindesay and Ruthven, two barons of warlike fame and ancient line, have not sought the prison-house of their kind mistress for such a purpose as these words seem to imply. Say, for the sake of honour and loyalty, that my ears have deceived me."

"No, madam," said Ruthven gravely, "your ears do *not* deceive you—they deceived you when they were closed against the preachers of the evangele, and the ho-

nest advice of your faithful subjects; and when they were ever open to flattery of pick-thanks and traitors, foreign cubiculars and domestic minions. The land may no longer brook the rule of one who cannot rule herself; wherefore, I pray you to comply with the last remaining wish of your subjects and counsellors, and spare yourself and us the further agitation of matter so painful."

"And, is this *all* my loving subjects require of me, my lord?" said Mary in a tone of bitter irony. "Do they really stint themselves to the easy boon that I should yield up the crown, which is mine by birthright, to an infant, which is scarcely more than a year old—fling down my sceptre, and take up a distaff—O no! it is too little for them to ask—That other roll of parchment contains something harder to be complied with, and which may more highly tax my readiness to comply with the petitions of my lieges."

"This parchment," answered Ruthven,

in the same tone of inflexible gravity, and unfolding the instrument as he spoke, "is one by which your Grace constitutes your nearest in blood, and the most honourable and trust-worthy of your subjects, James, Earl of Murray, Regent of the kingdom during the minority of the young King. He already holds the appointment from the Secret Council."

The Queen gave a sort of shriek, and clapping her hands together, exclaimed, "Comes the arrow out of his quiver?—out of my brother's bow? Alas! I looked for his return from France as my sole, at least my readiest, chance of deliverance. And yet, when I heard that he had assumed the government, I guessed he would shame to wield it in my name."

"I must pray your answer, madam," said Lord Ruthven, "to the demand of the Council."

"The demand of the Council!" said the Queen; "say rather the demand of a set

of robbers, impatient to divide the spoil they have seized. To such a demand, and sent by the mouth of a traitor, whose scalp, but for my womanish mercy, should long since have stood on the city gates, Mary of Scotland has no answer."

"I trust, madam," said Lord Ruthven, "my being unacceptable to your presence will not add to your obduracy of resolution. It may become you to remember that the death of the minion, Rizzio, cost the house of Ruthven its head and leader. My father, more worthy than a whole province of such vile sycophants, died in exile, and broken-hearted."

The Queen clasped her hands on her face, and resting her arms on the table, stooped down her head and wept so bitterly, that the tears were seen to find their way in streams between the white and slender fingers with which she endeavoured to conceal them.

"My lords," said Sir Robert Melville, "this is too much rigour. Under your

lordships' favour, we came hither, not to revive old griefs, but to find the mode of avoiding new ones."

"Sir Robert Melville," said Ruthven, "we best know for what purpose we were delegated hither, and wherefore you were somewhat unnecessarily sent to attend us."

"Nay, by my hand," said Lord Lindesay, "I know not why we were cumbered with the good knight, unless he comes in place of the lump of sugar which pothicars put into their wholesome but bitter medicaments, to please a froward child—a needless labour, methinks, where men have the means to make them swallow the physic otherwise."

"Nay, my lords," said Melville, "ye best know your own secret instructions. I conceive I shall best obey mine in striving to mediate between her grace and you."

"Be silent, Sir Robert Melville," said the Queen, arising, and her face still glowing with agitation as she spoke. "My kerchief, Fleming—I shame that traitors should

have power to move me thus.—Tell me, proud lords," she added, wiping away the tears as she spoke, "by what earthly warrant can liege subjects pretend to challenge the rights of an anointed Sovereign—to throw off the allegiance they have vowed, and to take away the crown from the head on which Divine warrant hath placed it?"

"Madam," said Ruthven, "I will deal plainly with you. Your reign, from the dismal field of Pinkie-cleuch, when you were a babe in the cradle, till now, that ye stand a grown dame before us, hath been such a tragedy of losses, disasters, civil dissentions, and foreign wars, that the like is not to be found in our chronicles. The French and English have, of one consent, made Scotland the battle-field on which to fight out their own ancient quarrel. For ourselves, every man's hand hath been against his brother, nor hath a year passed over without rebellion and slaughter, exile of nobles, and oppressing of the commons. We may endure it no longer, and, there-

fore, as a prince, to whom God hath refused the gift of hearkening to wise counsel, and on whose dealings and projects no blessing hath ever descended, we pray you to give way to other rule and governance of the land, that a remnant may yet be saved to this distracted realm."

"My lord," said Mary, "it seems to me that you fling on my unhappy and devoted head those evils, which, with far more justice, I may impute to your own turbulent, wild, and untameable dispositions—the frantic violence with which you, the Magnates of Scotland, enter into feuds against each other, sticking at no cruelty to gratify your wrath, taking deep revenge for the slightest offences, and setting at defiance those wise laws which your ancestors made for staunching of such cruelty, rebelling against the lawful authority, and bearing yourselves as if there were no king in the land; or rather as if each were king in his own premises. And now you throw the blame on

me—on me, whose life has been embittered—whose sleep has been broken—whose happiness has been wrecked by your dissentions. Have I not myself been obliged to traverse wilds and mountains, at the head of a few faithful followers, to maintain peace and to put down oppression? Have I not worn harness on my person, and carried pistols at my saddle; fain to lay aside the softness of a woman, and the dignity of a Queen, that I might show an example to my followers?"

"We grant, madam," said Lindesay rudely, "that the affrays occasioned by your mis-government, may sometimes have startled you in the midst of a masque or galliard; or it may be that such may have interrupted the idolatry of the mass, or the jesuitical counsels of some French ambassador. But the longest and severest journey which your Grace has taken in my memory, was from Hawick to Hermitage Castle; and whether it was for the weal of the

State, or for your own honour, rests with your Grace's conscience."

The Queen turned to him with inexpressible sweetness of tone and manner, and that engaging look which heaven had assigned her, as if to shew that the choicest arts to win men's affections may be given in vain. "Lindesay," she said, "you spoke not to me in this stern tone, and with such scurril taunt, yon fair summer evening, when you and I shot at the butts against the Earl of Mar and Mary Livingstone, and won of them the evening's collation, in the privy garden of Saint Andrews. The Master of Lindesay was then my friend, and vowed to be my soldier. How I have offended the Lord of Lindesay I know not, unless honours have changed manners."

Hard-hearted as he was, Lindesay seemed struck with this unexpected appeal, but almost instantly replied, "Madam, it is well known that your Grace could in those days make fools of whomsoever approached you.

—I pretend not to have been wiser than others. But gayer men and better courtiers soon jostled aside my rude homage, and I think your Grace cannot but remember times, when my awkward attempts to take the manners that pleased you, were the sport of the court-popinjays, the Maries and the French-women."

"My lord, I grieve if I have offended you through idle gaiety," said the Queen; "and can but say it was most unwittingly done. You are fully revenged; for through gaiety," she said with a sigh, "will I never offend any one more."

"Our time is wasting, madam," said Lord Ruthven; "I must pray your decision on this weighty matter which I have submitted to you."

"What, my lord," said the Queen, "upon the instant and without a moment's time to deliberate—can the Council, as they term themselves, expect this of me?"

"Madam," replied Ruthven, "the Coun-

cil hold the opinion, that since the fatal term which passed betwixt the night of King Henry's murder and the day of Carberry-hill, your Grace should have held you prepared for the measure now proposed, as the easiest escape from your numerous dangers and difficulties."

"Great God!" exclaimed the Queen; "and is it as a boon that you propose to me, what every Christian king ought to regard as a loss of honour equal to the loss of life!—You take from me my crown, my power, my subjects, my wealth, my state. What, in the name of every saint, can you offer, or do you offer, in requital of my compliance!"

"We give you pardon," answered Ruthven, sternly—"we give you space and means to spend your remaining life in penitence and seclusion—we give you time to make your peace with Heaven, and to receive the pure Gospel, which you have ever rejected and persecuted."

The Queen turned pale at the menace which this speech, as well as the rough and inflexible tones of the speaker, seemed distinctly to infer—" And if I do not comply with your request so fiercely urged, my lord, what then follows?"

She said this in a voice in which female and natural fear was contending with the feelings of insulted dignity.—There was a pause, as if no one cared to return to the question a distinct answer. At length Ruthven spoke: " There is little need to tell to your Grace, who are well read both in the laws and in the chronicles of the realm, that murder and adultery are crimes for which ere now queens themselves have suffered death."

" And where, my lord, or how, found you an accusation so horrible, against her who stands before you?" said Queen Mary. " The foul and odious calumnies which have poisoned the general mind of Scotland, and placed me a helpless prisoner in your hands, are surely no proof of guilt."

"We need look for no further proof, than the shameless marriage betwixt the widow of the murdered and the leader of the band of murderers! They that joined hands in the fated month of May, had already united hearts and counsel in the deed which preceded that marriage but a few brief weeks."

"My lord, my lord!" said the Queen, eagerly, "remember well there were more consents than mine went to that fatal union, that most unhappy act of a most unhappy life. The evil steps adopted by sovereigns, are often the suggestion of bad counsellors; but these counsellors are worse than fiends who tempt and betray, if they themselves are the first to call their unfortunate princes to answer for the consequences of their own advice.—Heard ye never of a bond by the nobles, my lords, recommending that ill-fated union to the ill-fated Mary? Methinks, were it carefully examined, we should see that the names of Morton, and of Lindesay, and of Ruthven, may be found in that bond,

which pressed me to marry that unhappy man.—Ah! stout and loyal Lord Herries, who never knew guile or dishonour, you bent your noble knee to me in vain, to warn me of my danger, and wert yet the first to draw thy good sword in my cause when I suffered for neglecting thy counsel! Faithful knight and true noble, what a difference betwixt thee and those counsellors of evil, who now threaten my life for having fallen into the snares they spread for me!"

"Madam," said Ruthven, "we know that you are an orator; and perhaps for that reason the Council has sent hither men, whose converse hath been more with the wars than with the language of the schools or the cabals of state. We but desire to know if, on assurance of life and honour, ye will demit the rule of this kingdom of Scotland?"

"And what warrant have I," said the Queen, "that ye will keep treaty with me, if I should barter my kingly estate for seclusion, and leave to weep in secret?"

"Our honour and our word, madam," answered Ruthven.

"They are too slight and unsolid pledges, my lord," said the Queen; "add at least a handful of thistle-down to give them weight in the balance."

"Away, Ruthven," said Lindesay; "she was ever deaf to counsel, save of slaves and sycophants; let her remain by her refusal, and abide by it."

"Stay, my lord," said Sir Robert Melville, "or rather permit me to have but a few minutes private audience with her Grace. If my presence with you could avail aught, it must be as a mediator—do not, I conjure you, leave the castle or break off the conference, until I bring you word how her Grace shall finally stand disposed."

"We will remain in the hall," said Lindesay, "for half an hour's space; but in despising our words and our pledge of honour, she has touched the honour of my name—

let her look herself to the course she has to pursue. If the half hour should pass away without her determining to comply with the demands of the nation, her career will be brief enough."

With little ceremony the two nobles left the apartment, traversed the vestibule, and descended the winding-stairs, the clash of Lindesay's huge sword being heard as it rang against each step in his descent. George Douglas followed them, after exchanging with Melville a gesture of surprise and sympathy.

As soon as they were gone, the Queen, again giving way to grief, fear, and agitation, threw herself into the seat, wrung her hands, and seemed to abandon herself to despair. Her female attendants, weeping themselves, endeavoured yet to pray herto be composed, and Sir Robert Melville, kneeling at her feet, made the same entreaty. After giving way to a passionate burst of sorrow, she at length said to Mel-

ville, " Kneel not to me, Melville—mock me not with the homage of the person, when the heart is far away—Why stay you behind with the deposed, the condemned? her who has but few hours perchance to live? You have been favoured as well as the rest; why do you continue the empty show of gratitude and thankfulness any longer than they?"

" Madam," said Sir Robert Melville, " so help me heaven at my need, my heart is as true to you as when you were in your highest place."

" True to me! true to me!" repeated the Queen, with some scorn; " tush, Melville, what signifies the truth which walks hand in hand with my enemies' falsehood?—thy hand and thy sword have never been so well acquainted that I can trust thee in aught where manhood is required—O, Seyton, for thy bold father, who is both wise, true, and valiant!"

Roland Græme could withstand no longer his earnest desire to offer his services to a

princess so distressed and so beautiful—"If one sword," he said, "madam, can do any thing to back the wisdom of this grave counsellor, or to defend your rightful cause, here is my weapon, and here is my hand ready to draw and use it." And raising his sword with the one hand, he laid the other upon the hilt.

As he thus held up the weapon, Catherine Seyton exclaimed, "Methinks I see a token from my father, madam;" and immediately crossing the apartment, she took Roland Græme by the skirt of the cloak, and asked him earnestly whence he had that sword.

The page answered with surprise, "Methinks this is no presence in which to jest—Surely, damsel, you yourself best know whence and how I obtained the weapon."

"Is this a time for folly?" said Catherine Seyton; "unsheathe the sword instantly!"

"If the Queen commands me?" said the youth, looking towards his royal mistress

"For shame, maiden!" said the Queen; "wouldst thou instigate the poor boy to enter into useless strife with the two most approved soldiers in Scotland?"

"In your Grace's cause," replied the page, "I will venture my life upon them!" And as he spoke, he drew his weapon partly from the sheath, and a piece of parchment, rolled around the blade, fell out and dropped on the floor. Catherine Seyton caught it up with eager haste.

"It is my father's hand-writing," she said, "and doubtless conveys his best duteous advice to your Majesty; I knew that it was prepared to be sent in this weapon, but I expected another messenger."

By my faith, fair one, thought Roland, and if you knew not that I had such a secret missive about me, I was yet more ignorant.

The Queen cast her eye upon the scroll, and remained a few minutes wrapped in deep thought. "Sir Robert Melville," she

at length said, "this scroll advises me to submit myself to necessity, and to subscribe the deeds these hard men have brought with them, as one who gives way to the natural fear inspired by the threats of rebels and murtherers. You, Sir Robert, are a wise man, and Seyton is both sagacious and brave. Neither, I think, would mislead me in this matter."

"Madam," said Melville, "if I have not the strength of body of the Lords Herries or Seyton, I will yield to neither in zeal for your Majesty's service. I cannot fight for you like these lords, but neither of them are more willing to die for your service."

"I believe it, my old and faithful counsellor," said the Queen, "and believe me, Melville, I did thee but a moment's injustice. Read what my Lord Seyton hath written to us, and give us thy best counsel."

He glanced over the parchment, and instantly replied,—"O! my dear and royal mistress, only treason itself could give you other advice than Lord Seyton has here

expressed. He, Herries, Huntly, the English ambassador Throgmorton, and others, your friends, are all alike of opinion, that, whatever deeds or instruments you execute within these walls, must lose all force and effect, as extorted from your Grace by duresse, by sufferance of present evil, and fear of men, and harm to ensue on your refusal. Yield, therefore, to the tide, and be assured, that in subscribing what parchments they present to you, you bind yourself to nothing, since your act of signature wants that which alone can make it valid, the free will of the granter."

"Ay, so says my Lord Seyton," replied Mary; "yet methinks, for the daughter of so long a line of sovereigns to resign her birth-right, because rebels press upon her with threats, argues little of royalty, and will read ill for the fame of Mary in future chronicles. Tush! Sir Robert Melville, the traitors may use black threats and bold words, but they will not dare to put their hands forth on our person."

"Alas! madam, they have already dared so far, and incurred such peril by the lengths which they have gone, that they are but one step from the worst and uttermost."

"Surely," said the Queen, her fears again predominating, "Scottish nobles would not lend themselves to assassinate a helpless woman?"

"Bethink you, madam," he replied, "what horrid spectacles have been seen in our day; and what act is so dark, that some Scottish hand has not been found to dare it? Lord Lindesay, besides his natural sullenness and hardness of temper, is the near kinsman of Henry Darnley, and Ruthven has his own deep and dangerous plans. The Council, besides, speak of proofs by writ and word, of a casket with letters—of I know not what."

"Ah! good Melville," answered the Queen, "were I as sure of the even-handed integrity of my judges, as of my own innocence—and yet"——

"Oh! pause, madam," said Melville;

"even innocence must sometimes for a season stoop to injurious blame. Besides, you are here"——

He looked round, and paused.

"Speak out, Melville," said the Queen, "never one approached my person who wished to work me evil; and even this poor page, whom I have to-day seen for the first time in my life, I can trust safely with your communication."

"Nay, madam," answered Melville, "in such emergence, and he being the bearer of Lord Seyton's message, I will venture to say before him and these fair ladies, whose truth and fidelity I dispute not—I say I will venture to say, that there are other modes besides that of open trial, by which deposed sovereigns often die; and that, as Machiavel saith, there is but one step betwixt a king's prison and his grave."

"Oh! were it but swift and easy for the body," said the unfortunate Princess, "were it but safe and happy change for the soul, the woman lives not that would take the

step so soon as I!—But, alas! Melville, when we think of death, a thousand sins, which we have trode as worms beneath our feet, rise up against us as flaming serpents. Most injuriously do they accuse me of being aiding of Darnley's death, yet, blessed Lady! I afforded too open occasion for the suspicion—I espoused Bothwell."

"Think not of that now, madam," said Melville, "think rather of the immediate mode of saving yourself and son. Comply with their present unreasonable demands, and trust that better times will shortly arrive."

"Madam," said Roland Græme, "if it pleases you that I should do so, I will presently swim through the lake, if they refuse me other conveyance to the shore; I will go to the courts successively of England, France, and Spain, and will shew you have subscribed these vile instruments from no stronger impulse than the fear of death, and I will do battle against them that say otherwise."

The Queen turned her round, and with one of those sweet smiles which, during the era of life's romance, overpay every risk, held her hand towards Roland, but without speaking a word. He kneeled reverently and kissed it, and Melville again resumed his plea.

"Madam," he said, "time presses, and you must not let these boats, which I see they are even now preparing, put forth on the lake. Here are enough of witnesses—your ladies—this bold youth—myself, when it can serve your cause effectually, for I would not hastily stand committed in this matter—but even without me here is evidence enough to shew, that you have yielded to the demands of the Council through force and fear, but from no sincere and unconstrained assent. Their boats are already manned for their return—oh! permit your old servant to recal them."

"Melville," said the Queen, "thou art an ancient courtier—when didst thou ever know a Sovereign Prince recal to his pre-

sence subjects, who had parted from him on such terms as those on which these envoys of the Council left us, and who yet were recalled without submission or apology?—Let it cost me both life and crown, I will not again command them to my presence."

"Alas! madam, that empty form should make a barrier! If I rightly understand, you are not unwilling to listen to real and advantageous counsel—but your scruple is saved—I hear them return to ask your final resolution.—O! take the advice of the noble Seyton, and you may once more command those who now usurp a triumph over you. But hush! I hear them in the vestibule."

As he concluded speaking, George Douglas opened the door of the apartment, and marshalled in the two noble envoys.

"We come, madam," said the Lord Ruthven, "to request your answer to the proposal of the Council."

"Your final answer," said Lord Lindesay, "for with a refusal you must couple the certainty that you have precipitated your

fate, and renounced the last opportunity of making peace with God, and ensuring your longer abode in the world."

"My lords," said Mary, with inexpressible grace and dignity, "the evils we cannot resist we must submit to—I will subscribe these parchments with such liberty of choice as my condition permits me. Were I on yonder shore, with a fleet jennet and ten good and loyal knights around me, I would subscribe my sentence of eternal condemnation, as soon as the resignation of my throne. But here, in the castle of Lochleven, with deep water around me—and you, my lords, beside me,—I have no freedom of choice. Give me the pen, Melville, and bear witness to what I do, and why I do it."

"It is our hope your Grace will not suppose yourself compelled, by any apprehensions from us," said the Lord Ruthven, "to execute what must be your own voluntary deed."

The Queen had already stooped towards the table, and placed the parchment before

her, with the pen between her fingers, ready for the important act of signature. But when Lord Ruthven had done speaking, she looked up, stopped short, and threw down the pen. "If," said she, "I am expected to declare I give away my crown of free will, or otherwise than because I am compelled to renounce it by the threat of worse evils to myself and my subjects, I will not put my name to such an untruth—not to gain full possession of England, France, and Scotland, all once my own, in possession or by right."

"Beware, madam," said Lindesay; and snatching hold of the Queen's arm with his own gauntletted hand, he pressed it, in the rudeness of his passion, more closely perhaps than he was himself aware of,—"beware how you contend with those who are the stronger, and have the mastery of your fate."

He held his grasp on her arm, bending his eyes on her with a stern and intimidating look, till both Ruthven and Mel-

ville cried shame; and Douglas, who had hitherto remained in a state of apparent apathy, had made a stride from the door, as if to interfere. The rude Baron then quitted his hold, disguising the confusion which he really felt at having indulged his passion to such extent, under a sullen and contemptuous smile.

The Queen immediately began, with an expression of pain, to bare the arm which he had grasped, by drawing up the sleeve of her gown, and it appeared that his grasp had left the purple marks of his iron fingers upon her flesh—" My lord," she said, " as a knight and gentleman, you might have spared my frail arm so severe a proof that you have the greater strength on your side, and are resolved to use it. But I thank you for it—it is the most decisive token of the terms on which this day's business is to rest.—I draw you to witness, both lords and ladies," she said, shewing the marks of the grasp on her arm, " that I subscribe these instruments in obedience to the sign manual

of my Lord of Lindesay, which you may see imprinted on mine arm."

Lindesay would have spoken, but was restrained by his colleague Ruthven, who said to him, " Peace, my lord. Let the Lady Mary of Scotland ascribe her signature to what she will, it is our business to procure it, and to carry it to the Council. Should there be debate hereafter on the manner in which it was adhibited, there will be time enough for it."

Lindesay was silent accordingly, only muttering within his beard, " I meant not to hurt her ; but I think women's flesh be as tender as new-fallen snow."

The Queen meanwhile subscribed the rolls of parchment with a hasty indifference, as if they had been matters of slight consequence, or of mere formality. When she had performed this painful task, she arose, and, having curtsied to the lords, was about to withdraw to her chamber. Ruthven and Sir Robert Melville made, the first a formal reverence, the second an obeisance, in

which his desire to acknowledge his sympathy was obviously checked by the fear of appearing in the eyes of his colleagues too partial to his former mistress. But Lindesay stood motionless, even when they were preparing to withdraw. At length, as if moved by a sudden impulse, he walked round the table which had hitherto been betwixt them and the Queen, kneeled on one knee, took her hand, kissed it, let it fall, and arose—"Lady," he said, "thou art a noble creature, even though thou hast abused God's choicest gifts. I pay that devotion to thy manliness of spirit, which I would not have paid to the power thou hast long undeservedly wielded—I kneel to Mary Stuart, not to the Queen."

"The Queen and Mary Stuart pity thee alike, Lindesay," said Mary—"alike they pity, and they forgive thee. An honoured soldier hadst thou been by a king's side—leagued with rebels, what art thou but a good blade in the hands of a ruffian?—Farewell, my Lord Ruthven, the smoother but the deeper

traitor.—Farewell, Melville. Mayst thou find masters that can understand state policy better, and have the means to reward it more richly than Mary Stuart.—Farewell, George of Douglas—make your respected grand-dame comprehend that we would be alone for the remainder of the day—God wot, we have need to collect our thoughts."

All bowed and withdrew; but scarce had they entered the vestibule, ere Ruthven and Lindesay were at variance. "Chide not with me, Ruthven," Lindesay was heard to say, in answer to something more indistinctly urged by his colleague—"Chide not with me, for I will not brook it!—You put the hangman's office on me in this matter, and even the very hangman hath leave to ask some pardon of those on whom he does his office. I would I had as deep cause to be this lady's friend as I have to be her enemy—thou shouldst see if I spared limb and life in her quarrel."

"Thou art a sweet minion," said Ruthven, "to fight a lady's quarrel, and all for

a brent brow and a tear in the eye! Such toys have been out of thy thoughts this many a year."

"Do me right, Ruthven," said Lindesay. "You are like a polished corslet of steel; it shines more gaudily, but it is not a whit softer—nay, it is five times harder than a Glasgow breast-plate of hammered iron. Enough, we know each other."

They descended the stairs, were heard to summon their boats, and the Queen signed to Roland Græme to retire to the vestibule, and leave her with her female attendants.

CHAPTER VIII.

Give me a morsel on the greensward rather,
Coarse as you will the cooking—Let the fresh spring
Bubble beside my napkin—and the free birds
Twittering and chirping, hop from bough to bough,
To claim the crumbs I leave for perquisites—
Your prison-feasts I like not.—

The Woodsman, a Drama.

A RECESS in the vestibule was enlightened by a small window, at which Roland Græme stationed himself to mark the departure of the lords. He could see their followers mustering on horseback under their respective banners—the western sun glancing on their corslets and steel caps as they moved to and fro, mounted or dismounted, at intervals. On the narrow space betwixt the castle and the water, the Lords Ruthven and Lindesay were already moving

slowly to their boats, accompanied by the Lady of Lochleven, her grandson, and their principal attendants. They took a ceremonious leave of each other, as Roland could discern by their gestures, and the boats put off from the landing-place; the boatmen stretched to their oars, and they speedily diminished upon the eye of the idle gazer, who had no better employment than to watch their motions. Such seemed also the occupation of the Lady Lochleven and George Douglas, who, returning from the landing-place, looked frequently back to the boats, and at length stopped as if to observe their progress under the window at which Roland Græme was stationed.—As they gazed on the lake, he could hear the lady distinctly say, "And she has bent her mind to save her life at the expence of her kingdom?"

"Her life, madam!" replied her son; "I know not who would dare to attempt it in the castle of my father. Had I dreamt that it was with such purpose that Lindesay

insisted on bringing his followers hither, neither he nor they should have passed the iron gate of Lochleven castle."

"I speak not of private slaughter, my son, but of open trial, condemnation and execution; for with such she has been threatened, and to such threats she has given way. Had she not had more of the false Guisian blood than of the royal race of Scotland in her veins, she had bidden them defiance to their teeth—But it is all of the same complexion, and meanness is the natural companion of profligacy.—I am discharged, forsooth, from intruding on her gracious presence this evening. Go thou, my son, and render the usual service of the meal to this unqueened Queen."

"So please you, lady mother," said Douglas, "I care not greatly to approach her presence."

"Thou art right, my son; and therefore I trust thy prudence, even because I have noted thy caution. She is like an isle on the

ocean, surrounded with shelves and quicksands; its verdure fair and inviting to the eye, but the wreck of many a goodly vessel which hath approached it too rashly. But for thee, my son, I fear nought; and we may not, with our honour, suffer her to eat without the attendance of one of us. She may die by the judgment of Heaven, or the fiend may have power over her in her despair; and then we would be touched in honour to shew, that in our house, and at our table, she had had all fair play and fitting usage."

Here Roland was interrupted by a smart tap on the shoulders, reminding him sharply of Adam Woodcock's adventure of the preceding evening. He turned round, almost expecting to see the page of Saint Michael's hostelry. He saw, indeed, Catherine Seyton; but she was in female attire, differing indeed a great deal in shape and materials from that which she had worn when they first met, and becoming her birth as the daughter of a great Baron, and

her rank as the attendant on a princess. "So, fair page," said she, "eaves-dropping is one of your page-like qualities I presume."

"Fair sister," answered Roland in the same tone, "if some friends of mine be as well acquainted with the rest of our mystery, as they are with the arts of swearing, swaggering, and switching, they need ask no page in Christendom for further insight into his vocation."

"Unless that pretty speech infer that you have yourself had the discipline of the switch since we last met, the probability whereof I nothing doubt, I profess, fair page, I am at a loss to conjecture your meaning. But there is no time to debate it now, they come with the evening meal. Be pleased, Sir Page, to do your duty."

Four servants entered bearing dishes, preceded by the same stern old steward whom Roland had already seen, and followed by George Douglas, already mentioned as the grandson of the Lady of Lochleven, and who, acting as seneschal, repre-

sented, upon this occasion, his father, the Lord of the Castle. He entered with his arms folded on his bosom, and his looks bent on the ground. With the assistance of Roland Græme, a table was suitably covered in the next or middle apartment, on which the domestics placed their burthens with great reverence, the steward and Douglas bending low when they had seen the table properly adorned, as if their royal prisoner had sate at the board in question. The door opened, and Douglas raising his eyes hastily, cast them again on the earth, when he perceived it was only the Lady Mary Fleming who entered.

"Her Grace," she said, "will not eat to-night."

"Let us hope she may be otherwise persuaded," said Douglas; "meanwhile, madam, please to see our duty performed."

A servant presented bread and salt on a silver plate, and the old steward carved for Douglas a small morsel in succession from each of the dishes presented, which he

tasted, as was then the custom at the tables of princes, to which death was often suspected to find its way in the disguise of food.

"The Queen will not then come forth to-night?" said Douglas.

"She has so determined," replied the lady.

"Our further attendance then is unnecessary—we leave you to your supper, fair ladies, and wish you good even."

He retired slowly as he came, and with the same air of deep dejection, and was followed by the attendants belonging to the castle. The two ladies sate down to their meal, and Roland Græme, with ready alacrity, prepared to wait upon them. Catherine Seyton whispered her companion, who replied, with the question spoken in a low tone, but looking at the page—"Is he of gentle blood and well nurtured?"

The answer which she received seemed satisfactory, for she said to Roland, "Sit

down, young gentleman, and eat with your sisters in captivity."

"Permit me rather to perform my duty in attending them," said Roland, anxious to shew he was possessed of the high tone of deference prescribed by the rules of chivalry towards the fair sex, and especially to dames and maidens of quality.

"You will find, Sir Page," said Catherine, "you will have little time allowed you for your meal; waste it not in ceremony, or you may rue your politeness ere to-morrow morning."

"Your speech is too free, maiden," said the elder lady; "the modesty of the youth may teach you more fitting fashions towards one whom to-day you have seen for the first time."

Catherine Seyton cast down her eyes, but not till she had given a single glance of inexpressible archness towards Roland, whom her more grave companion now addressed in a tone of protection.

"Regard her not, young gentleman—she knows little of the world, save the forms of a country nunnery—take thy place at the board-end, and refresh thyself after thy journey."

Roland Græme obeyed willingly, as it was the first food he had that day tasted; for Lindesay and his followers seemed regardless of human wants. Yet, notwithstanding the sharpness of his appetite, a natural gallantry of disposition, the desire of shewing himself a well-nurtured gentleman in all courtesies towards the fair sex, and, for aught I know, the pleasure of assisting Catherine Seyton, kept his attention awake during the meal, to all those nameless acts of duty and service which gallants of that age were accustomed to render. He carved with neatness and decorum, and selected duly whatever was most delicate to place before the ladies. Ere they could form a wish, he sprung from the table, ready to comply with it—poured wine—tempered

it with water—removed and exchanged trenchers, and performed the whole honours of the table, with an air at once of cheerful diligence, profound respect, and graceful promptitude.

When he observed that they had finished eating, he hastened to offer to the elder lady the silver ewer, basin, and napkin, with the ceremony and gravity which he would have used towards Mary herself. He next, with the same decorum, having supplied the basin with fair water, presented it to Catherine Seyton. Apparently, she was determined to disturb his self-possession, if possible; for, while in the act of bathing her hands, she contrived, as it were by accident, to flirt some drops of water upon the face of the assiduous assistant. But if such was her mischievous purpose she was completely disappointed; for Roland Græme, internally piquing himself on his self-command, neither laughed nor was discomposed; and all that the maiden gained by her frolic was a severe rebuke from

her companion, taxing her with mal-address and indecorum. Catherine replied not, but sat pouting, something in the humour of a spoilt child, who watches the opportunity of wreaking upon some one or other its resentment for a deserved reprimand.

The Lady Mary Fleming, in the meanwhile, was naturally well pleased with the exact and reverent observance of the page, and said to Catherine, after a favourable glance at Roland Græme,—" You might well say, Catherine, our companion in inactivity was well-born and gently nurtured.—I would not make him vain by my praise, but his services enable us to dispense with those which George Douglas condescends not to afford us, save when the Queen is herself in presence."

" Umph! I think hardly," answered Catherine. " George Douglas is one of the most handsome gallants in Scotland, and 'tis pleasure to see him even still, when the gloom of Lochleven Castle has shed the same melancholy over him, that it has done

over every thing else. When he was at Holyrood, who would have said the young sprightly George Douglas would have been contented to play the locksman here in Lochleven, with no gayer amusement than that of turning the key on two or three helpless women?—a strange office for a Knight of the Bleeding Heart—why does he not leave it to his father or his brothers?"

"Perhaps, like us, he has no choice," answered the Lady Fleming. "But Catherine, thou hast used thy brief space at court well, to remember what George Douglas was then."

"I used mine eyes, which I suppose was what I was designed to do, and they were worth using there. When I was at the nunnery, they were very useless appurtenances; and now I am at Lochleven, they are good for nothing, save to look over that eternal work of embroidery."

"You say thus, when you have been but

a few brief hours amongst us—was this the maiden who would live and die in a dungeon, might she but have permission to wait on her gracious Queen?"

"Nay, if you chide in earnest, my jest is ended," said Catherine Seyton. "I would not yield in attachment to my poor godmother, to the gravest dame that ever had wise saws upon her tongue, and a double-starch'd ruff around her throat—you know I would not, Dame Mary Fleming, and it is putting shame on me to say otherwise.'

She will challenge the other court lady, thought Roland Græme; she will to a certainty fling down her glove, and if Dame Mary Fleming hath but the soul to lift it, we may have a combat in the lists!—But the answer of Lady Mary Fleming was such as turns away wrath.

"Thou art a good child," she said, "my Catherine, and a faithful; but heaven pity him who shall have one day a creature so beautiful to delight him, and a thing so

mischievous to torment him—thou art fit to drive twenty husbands stark mad."

"Nay," said Catherine, resuming the full career of her careless good humour, "he must be half-witted beforehand, that gives me such an opportunity. But I am glad you are not angry with me in sincerity," casting herself as she spoke into the arms of her friend, and continuing, with a tone of apologetic fondness, while she kissed her on either side of the face, "you know, my dear Fleming, that I have to contend with both my father's lofty pride, and with my mother's high spirit—God bless them! they have left me these good qualities, having small portion to give beside, as times go—and so I am wilful and saucy; but let me remain but a week in this castle, and O, my dear Fleming, my spirit will be as chastized and as humble as thine own."

Dame Mary Fleming's sense of dignity, and love of form, could not resist this

affectionate appeal. She kissed Catherine Seyton in her turn affectionately; while answering the last part of her speech, she said, "Now, Our Lady forbid, dear Catherine, that you should lose aught that is beseeming of what becomes so well your light heart and lively humour. Keep but your sharp wit on this side of madness, and it cannot but be a blessing to us. But let me go, mad wench—I hear her Grace touch her silver call." And, extricating herself from Catherine's grasp, she went towards the door of Queen Mary, from which was heard the low tone of a silver whistle, which, now only used by the boatswains in the navy, was then, for want of bells, the ordinary mode by which ladies, even of the very highest rank, summoned their domestics. When she had made two or three steps towards the door of the Queen's apartment, however, she turned back, and advancing to the young couple whom she left together, she said, in a very serious though a low tone, "I trust it is impossible that we can, any of

us, or in any circumstances, forget, that few as we are, we form the household of the Queen of Scotland; and that, in her calamity, all boyish mirth and childish jesting can only serve to give a great triumph to her enemies, who have already found their account in objecting to her the lightness of every idle folly, that the young and the gay practised in her court." So saying, she left the apartment.

Catherine Seyton seemed much struck with this remonstrance—She suffered herself to drop into the seat which she had quitted when she went to embrace Dame Mary Fleming, and for some time rested her brow upon her hands; while Roland Græme looked at her earnestly, with a mixture of emotions which perhaps he himself could neither have analyzed nor explained. As she raised her face slowly from the posture to which a momentary feeling of self-rebuke had depressed it, her eyes encountered those of Roland, and became gradually animated with their usual spirit of mali-

cious drollery, which not unnaturally excited a similar expression in those of the equally volatile page. They sat for the space of two minutes, each looking at the other with great seriousness on their features, and much mirth in their eyes, until at length Catherine was the first to break silence.

"May I pray you, fair sir," she began, very demurely, "to tell me what you see in my face to arouse looks so extremely sagacious and knowing as those with which it is your worship's pleasure to honour me? It would seem as there were some wonderful confidence and intimacy betwixt us, fair sir, if one is to judge from your extremely cunning looks; and so help me, Our Lady, as I never saw you but twice in my life before."

"And where were these happy occasions," said Roland, "if I may be bold enough to ask the question?"

"At the nunnery of Saint Catherine's," said the damsel, "in the first instance; and,

in the second, during five minutes of a certain raid or foray which it was your pleasure to make into the lodging of my lord and father, Lord Seyton, from which, to my surprise, as probably to your own, you returned with a token of friendship and favour, instead of broken bones, which were the more probable reward of your intrusion, considering the prompt ire of the house of Seyton. I am deeply mortified," she added, ironically, "that your recollection should require refreshment on a subject so important; and that my memory should be stronger than yours on such an occasion, is truly humiliating."

"Your own memory is not so exactly correct, fair mistress," answered the page, "seeing you have forgotten meeting the third, in the hostelry of Saint Michael's, when it pleased you to lay your switch across the face of my comrade, in order, I warrant, to shew that, in the house of Seyton, neither the prompt ire of its descendants, nor the use of the doublet and

hose, are subject to Salique law, or confined to the use of the males."

"Fair sir," answered Catherine, looking at him with great steadiness, and some surprise, "unless your fair wits have forsaken you, I am at a loss what to conjecture of your meaning."

"By my troth, fair mistress," answered Roland, "and were I as wise a warlock as Michael Scott, I could scarce riddle the dream you read me. Did I not see you last night in the hostelry of Saint Michael's?—Did you not bring me this sword, with command not to draw it, save at the command of my native and rightful sovereign? And have I not done as you required me? Or is the sword a piece of lath—my word a bullrush—my memory a dream—and my eyes good for nought—espials which corbies might pick out of my head?"

"And if your eyes serve you not more truly on other occasions than in your vision of Saint Michael," said Catherine, "I know not, the pain apart, that the corbies would

do you any great injury in the deprivation —But hark, the bell—hush, for God's sake, we are interrupted."——

The damsel was right; for no sooner had the dull toll of the castle bell begun to resound through the vaulted apartment, than the door of the vestibule flew open, and the steward, with his severe countenance, his gold chain, and his white rod, entered the apartment, followed by the same train of domestics who had placed the dinner on the table, and who now, with the same ceremonious formality, began to remove it.

The steward remained motionless as some old picture, while the domestics did their office; and when it was accomplished, every thing removed from the table, and the board itself taken from its tressels and disposed against the wall, he said aloud, without addressing any one in particular, and somewhat in the tone of a herald reading a proclamation, "My noble lady, Dame Margaret Erskine, by mar-

riage Douglas, lets the Lady Mary of Scotland and her attendants to wit, that a servant of the true evangele, her reverend chaplain, will to-night, as usual, expound, lecture, and catechize, according to the forms of the congregation of gospellers."

"Hark you, my friend, Mr Dryfesdale," said Catherine, "I understand this announcement is a nightly form of yours. Now, I pray you to remark, that the Lady Fleming and I—for I trust your insolent invitation concerns us only—have chosen Saint Peter's pathway to heaven, so I see no one whom your godly exhortation, catechize, or lecture, can benefit, excepting this poor page, who, being in Satan's hand as well as yourself, had better worship with you than remain to cumber our better-advised devotions."

The page was well nigh giving a round denial to the assertion which this speech implied, when, remembering what had passed betwixt him and the Regent, and seeing Catherine's finger raised in a monitory

fashion, he felt himself, as on former occasions at the Castle of Avenel, obliged to submit to the task of dissimulation, and followed Dryfesdale down to the castle-chapel, where he assisted in the devotions of the evening.

The chaplain was named Elias Henderson. He was a man in the prime of life, and possessed of good natural parts, carefully improved by the best education which these times afforded. To these qualities were added a faculty of close and terse reasoning; and, at intervals, a flow of happy illustration and natural eloquence. The religious faith of Roland Græme, as we have already had opportunity to observe, rested on no secure basis, but was entertained rather in obedience to his grandmother's behests, and his secret desire to contradict the chaplain of Avenel Castle, than from any fixed or steady reliance which he placed on the Romish creed. His ideas had been of late considerably enlarged by the scenes he had passed through;

and feeling that there was shame in not understanding something of those political disputes betwixt the professors of the ancient and of the reformed faith, he listened with more attention than it had hitherto been in his nature to yield on such occasions, to an animated discussion of some of the principal points of difference betwixt the churches. So passed away the first day in the Castle of Lochleven; and those which followed it, were, for some time, of a very monotonous and uniform tenor.

CHAPTER IX.

'Tis a weary life this——
Vaults overhead, and grates and bars around me,
And my sad hours spent with as sad companions,
Whose thoughts are brooding o er their own mischances,
Far, far too deeply to take part in mine.

The Woodsman.

The course of life to which Mary and her little retinue were doomed, was in the last degree secluded and lonely, varied only as the weather permitted or rendered impossible the Queen's usual walk in the garden, or on the battlements. The greater part of the morning she wrought with her ladies at those pieces of needle-work, many of which still remain proofs of her indefatigable application. At such hours the page was permitted the freedom of the castle and islet; nay, he was sometimes invited to attend George of Douglas when he went a sport-

ing upon the lake, or on its margin; opportunities of diversion, which were only clouded by the remarkable melancholy which always seemed to brood on that gentleman's brow, and to mark his whole demeanour,—a sadness so profound, that Roland never observed him to smile or to speak any word unconnected with the immediate object of their exercise.

The most pleasant part of Roland's day, was the occasional space which he was permitted to pass in personal attendance on the Queen and her ladies, together with the regular dinner-time, which he always spent with Dame Mary Fleming and Catherine Seyton. On these occasions, he had frequent occasion to admire the lively spirit and inventive imagination of the latter damsel, who was unwearied in her contrivances to amuse her mistress, and to banish, for a time at least, the melancholy which preyed on her bosom. She danced, she sung, she recited tales of ancient and modern times, with that heartfelt exertion of talent, of which

the pleasure lies not in the vanity of displaying it to others, but in the enthusiastic consciousness that we possess it ourselves. And yet these high accomplishments were mixed with an air of rusticity and hair-brained vivacity, which seemed rather to belong to some village-maid, the coquette of the ring around the May-pole, than to the high-bred descendant of an ancient baron. A touch of audacity altogether short of effrontery, and far less approaching to vulgarity, gave as it were a wildness to all that she did, and Mary, while defending her from some occasional censure of her grave companion, compared her to a trained singing-bird escaped from a cage, which practises in all the luxuriance of freedom, and in full possession of the greenwood bough, the airs which it had learned during its earlier captivity.

The moments which the page was permitted to pass in the presence of this fascinating creature, danced so rapidly away, that, brief as they were, they compensated the weary dulness of all the rest of the day.

The space of indulgence, however, was always brief, nor were any private interviews betwixt him and Catherine permitted, or even possible. Whether it were some special precaution respecting the Queen's household, or whether it were her general ideas of propriety, Dame Fleming seemed particularly attentive to prevent the young people from holding any separate correspondence together, and bestowed, for Catherine's sole benefit in this matter, the full stock of prudence and experience which she had acquired, when mother of the Queen's maidens of honour, and by which she had acquired their hearty hatred. Casual meetings, however, could not be prevented, unless Catherine had been more desirous of shunning, or Roland Græme less anxious in watching for them. A smile, a gibe, a sarcasm, disarmed of its severity by the arch look with which it was accompanied, was all that time permitted to pass between them on such occasions. But such passing interview neither afforded time nor

opportunity to renew the discussion of the circumstances attending their earlier acquaintance, nor to permit Roland to investigate more accurately the mysterious apparition of the page in the purple velvet cloak at the hostelry of Saint Michael's.

The winter's months slipped heavily away, and spring was already advanced, when Roland Græme observed a gradual change in the manners of his fellow prisoners. Having no business of his own to attend to, and being, like those of his age, education, and degree, sufficiently curious concerning what passed around, he became by degrees to suspect, and finally to be convinced, that there was something in agitation among his companions in captivity, to which they did not desire that he should be privy. Nay he became almost certain that, by some means unintelligible to him, Queen Mary held correspondence beyond the walls and waters which surrounded her prison-house, and that she nourished some secret hope of deliverance or escape. In the conversations betwixt her and her at-

tendants, at which he was necessarily present, the Queen could not always avoid shewing that she was acquainted with the events which were passing abroad in the world, and which he only heard through her report. He observed that she wrote more and worked less than had been her former custom, and that, as if desirous to lull suspicion asleep, she changed her manner towards the Lady Lochleven into one more gracious, and which seemed to express a resigned submission to her lot—" They think I am blind," he said to himself, " and that I am unfit to be trusted because I am so young, or it may be because I was sent hither by the Regent. Well!—be it so—they may be glad to confide in me in the long run; and Catherine Seyton, for as saucy as she is, may find me as safe a confidant as that sullen Douglas, whom she is always running after. It may be they are angry with me for listening to Master Elias Henderson; but it was their own fault for sending me there, and if the man speaks truth and good sense, and preaches only the word of God,

he is as like to be right as either Pope or Councils."

It is probable that in this last conjecture, Roland Græme had hit upon the real cause why the ladies had not entrusted him with their counsel. He had of late had several conferences with Henderson on the subject of religion, and had given him to understand that he stood in need of his instructions, although he had not thought there was either prudence or necessity for confessing that hitherto he had held the tenets of the Church of Rome.

Elias Henderson, a keen propagator of the reformed faith, had sought the seclusion of Lochleven Castle, with the express purpose and expectation of making converts from Rome amongst the domestics of the dethroned Queen, and confirming the faith of those who already held the Protestant doctrines. Perhaps his hopes soared a little higher, and he might nourish some expectation of a proselyte more distinguished, in the person of the deposed Queen. But the per-

tinacity with which she and her female attendants refused to see or listen to him, rendered such hope, if he nourished it, altogether abortive.

The opportunity, therefore, of enlarging the religious information of Roland Græme, and bringing him to a more due sense of his duties to Heaven, was hailed by the good man as a door opened by Providence for the salvation of a sinner. He dreamed not, indeed, that he was converting a Papist, but such was the ignorance which Roland displayed upon some material points of the reformed doctrine, that Master Henderson, while praising his docility to the Lady Lochleven and her grandson, seldom failed to add, that his venerable brother, Henry Warden, must be now decayed in strength and in mind, since he found a catechumen of his flock so ill grounded in the principles of his belief. For this, indeed, Roland Græme thought it was unnecessary to assign the true reason, which was his having made it a point of

honour to forget all that Henry Warden taught him, as soon as he was no longer compelled to repeat it over as a lesson acquired by rote. The lessons of his new instructor, if not more impressively delivered, were received by a more willing ear, and a more awakened understanding, and the solitude of Lochleven Castle was favourable to graver thoughts than the page had hitherto entertained. He wavered yet, indeed, as one who was almost persuaded; but his attention to the chaplain's instructions procured him favour even with the stern old dame herself; and he was once or twice, but under great precaution, permitted to go to the neighbouring village of Kinross, situated on the mainland, to execute some ordinary commission of his unfortunate mistress.

For some time Roland Græme might be considered as standing neuter betwixt the two parties who inhabited the water-girdled Tower of Lochleven; but, as he rose in the opinion of the Lady of the Castle and her

chaplain, he perceived, with great grief, that he lost ground in that of Mary and her female allies.

He came gradually to be sensible that he was regarded as a spy upon their discourse, and that, instead of the ease with which they had formerly conversed in his presence, without suppressing any of the natural feelings of anger, or sorrow, or mirth, which the chance topic of the moment happened to call forth, their talk was now studiously restricted to the most indifferent subjects, and a studied reserve observed even in their mode of treating these. This obvious want of confidence was accompanied with a correspondent change in their personal demeanour towards the unfortunate page. The Queen, who had at first treated him with marked courtesy, now scarce spoke to him, save to convey some necessary command for her service. The Lady Fleming restricted her notice to the most dry and distant expressions of civility, and Catherine Seyton became bit-

ter in her pleasantries, and shy, cross, and petted in any intercourse they had together. What was yet more provoking, he saw, or thought he saw, marks of intelligence betwixt George Douglas and the beautiful Catherine Seyton; and, sharpened by jealousy, he wrought himself almost into a certainty, that the looks which they exchanged conveyed matters of deep and serious import. No wonder, he thought, if, courted by the son of a proud and powerful baron, she can no longer spare a word or look to the poor fortuneless page.

In a word, Roland Græme's situation became truly uncomfortable, and his heart naturally enough rebelled against the injustice of this treatment, which deprived him of the only comfort which he had received for submitting to a confinement in other respects irksome. He accused Queen Mary and Catherine Seyton (for concerning the opinion of Dame Fleming he was indifferent) of inconsistency, in being displeased with him on account of the natural conse-

quences of an order of their own. Why did they send him to hear this overpowering preacher? The Abbot Ambrosius, he recollected, understood the weakness of their Popish cause better, when he enjoined him to repeat within his mind *aves*, and *credos*, and *paters*, all the while old Henry Warden preached or lectured, that so he might secure himself against lending even a momentary ear to his heretical doctrine. "But I will endure this life no longer," said he to himself manfully; "do they suppose I would betray my mistress, because I see cause to doubt of her religion?—that would be a serving, as they say, the devil for God's sake—I will forth into the world—he that serves fair ladies, may at least expect kind looks and kind words, and I bear not the mind of a gentleman, to submit to cold treatment and suspicion, and a life-long captivity besides. I will speak to George Douglas to-morrow when we go out together fishing."

A sleepless night was spent in agitating

this magnanimous resolution, and he arose in the morning not perfectly decided in his own mind whether he should abide by it or not. It happened that he was summoned by the Queen at an unusual hour, and just as he was about to go out with George Douglas. He went to attend her commands in the garden; but as he had his angling-rod in his hand, the circumstance announced his previous intention, and the Queen, turning to the Lady Fleming, said, "Catherine must devise some other amusement for us, *ma bonne amie*; our discreet page has already made his party for the day's pleasure."

"I said from the beginning," answered the Lady Fleming, "that your Grace ought not to rely on being favoured with the company of a youth who has so many Huguenot acquaintances; and has the means of amusing himself far more agreeably than with us."

"I wish," said Catherine, her animated features reddening with mortification, "that

his friends would sail away with him for good, and bring us in return a page (if such a thing can be found) faithful to his Queen and to his religion."

"One part of your wishes may be granted, madam," said Roland Græme, unable any longer to restrain his sense of the treatment which he received on all sides; and he was about to add, "I heartily wish you a companion in my room, if such can be found, who is capable of enduring women's caprices without going distracted." Luckily, he recollected the remorse which he had felt at having given way to the vivacity of his temper upon a similar occasion; and, closing his lips, imprisoned until it died on his tongue, a reproach so misbecoming the presence of majesty.

"Why do you remain there," said the Queen, "as if you were rooted to the parterre?"

"I but attend your Grace's commands," said the page.

"I have none to give you—Begone, sir!"

As he left the garden to go to the boat, he distinctly heard Mary upbraid one of her attendants in these words:—"You see to what you have exposed us!"

This brief scene at once determined Roland Græme's resolution to quit the castle, if it were possible, and to impart his resolution to George Douglas without loss of time. That gentleman, in his usual mood of silence, sate in the stern of the little skiff which they used on such occasions, trimming his fishing-tackle, and, from time to time, indicating by signs to Græme, who pulled the oars, which way he should row. When they were a furlong or two from the castle, Roland rested on the oars, and addressed his companion somewhat abruptly, "I have something of importance to say to you, under your pleasure, fair sir."

The pensive melancholy of Douglas's countenance at once gave way to the eager, keen, and startled look of one who expects to hear something of deep and alarming import.

"I am wearied to the very death, of this Castle of Lochleven," continued Roland.

"Is that all?" said Douglas; "I know none of its inhabitants who are much better pleased with it."

"Ay—but I am neither a native of the house, nor a prisoner in it, and so I may reasonably desire to leave it."

"You might desire to quit it with equal reason," answered Douglas, "if you were both the one and the other."

"But," said Roland Græme, "I am not only tired of living in Lochleven Castle, but I am determined to quit it."

"That is a resolution more easily taken than executed," replied Douglas.

"Not if yourself, sir, and your Lady Mother, chuse to consent," answered the page.

"You mistake the matter, Roland," said Douglas; "you will find that the consent of two other persons is equally essential—that of the Lady Mary your mistress, and that of my uncle the Regent, who placed you about her person, and who will not

think it proper that she should change her attendants so soon."

"And must I then remain whether I will or no?" demanded the page, somewhat appalled at a view of the subject, which would have occurred sooner to a person of more experience.

"At least," said George Douglas, "you must will to remain till my uncle wills to dismiss you."

"Frankly," said the page, "and speaking to you as a gentleman who is incapable of betraying me, I will confess, that if I thought myself a prisoner here, neither walls nor water should confine me long."

"Frankly," said Douglas, "I could not much blame you for the attempt; yet, for all that, my father, or uncle, or the earl, or any of my brothers, or in short any of the king's lords into whose hands you fell, would in such a case hang you like a dog, or like a centinel who deserts his post. And I promise you that you will hardly escape them —but row towards Saint Serf's island—there

is a breeze from the west, and we will have sport keeping to windward of the isle, where the ripple is strongest. We will speak more of what you have mentioned, when we have had an hour's sport."

Their fishing was successful, though never did two anglers pursue even that silent and unsocial pleasure with less verbal intercourse.

When their time was expired, Douglas took the oars in his turn, and by his order Roland Græme steered the boat, directing her course upon the landing-place at the Castle. But he also stopped in the midst of his course, and looking around him, said to Græme, "There is a thing which I could mention to thee, but it is so deep a secret, that even here, surrounded as we are by sea and sky, without the possibility of a listener, I cannot prevail on myself to speak it out."

"Better leave it unspoken, sir," answered Roland Græme, "if you doubt the honour of him who alone can hear it."

"I doubt not your honour," replied

George Douglas; "but you are young, imprudent, and changeful."

"Young," said Roland, "I am, and it may be imprudent—but who hath informed you that I am changeful?"

"One that knows you, perhaps, better than you know yourself," replied Douglas.

"I suppose you mean Catherine Seyton," said the page, his heart rising as he spoke; "but she is herself fifty times more variable in her humour than the very water which we are floating upon."

"My young acquaintance," said Douglas, "I pray you to remember that Catherine Seyton is a lady of blood and birth, and must not be lightly spoken of."

"Master George of Douglas," said Græme, "as that speech seemed to be made under the warrant of something like a threat, I pray you to observe, that I value not the threat at the estimation of a fin of one of these dead trouts; and, moreover, I would have you to know that the champion who under-

takes the defence of every lady of blood and birth, whom men accuse of change of faith and of fashion, is like to have enough of work on his hands."

"Go to," said the Seneschal, but in a tone of good humour, "thou art a foolish boy, unfit to deal with any matter more serious than the casting of a net, or the flying of a hawk."

"If your secret concern Catherine Seyton," said the page, "I care not for it, and so you may tell her if you will. I wot she can shape you opportunity to speak with her, as she has ere now."

The flush which passed over Douglas's face, made the page aware that he had lighted on a truth, when he was, in fact, speaking at random; and the feeling that he had done so, was like striking a dagger into his own heart. His companion, without farther answer, resumed the oars, and pulled lustily till they arrived at the island and the castle. The servants received the produce of their spoil, and the two fishers,

turning from each other in silence, went each to his several apartment.

Roland Græme had spent about an hour in grumbling against Catherine Seyton, the Queen, the Regent, and the whole House of Lochleven, with George Douglas at the head of it, when the time approached that his duty called him to attend the meal of Queen Mary. As he arranged his dress for this purpose, he grudged the trouble, which, on similar occasions, he used, with boyish foppery, to consider as one of the most important duties of his day; and when he went to take his place behind the chair of the Queen, it was with an air of offended dignity, which could not escape her observation, and probably appeared to her ridiculous enough, for she whispered something in French to her ladies, at which the Lady Fleming laughed, and Catherine appeared half diverted and half disconcerted. This pleasantry, of which the subject was concealed from him, the unfortunate page re-

ceived, of course, as a new offence, and called an additional degree of sullen dignity into his mien, which might have exposed him to farther raillery, but that Mary appeared disposed to make allowance for, and compassionate his feelings.

With the peculiar tact and delicacy which no woman possessed in greater perfection, she began to sooth by degrees the vexed spirit of her magnanimous attendant. The excellence of the fish which he had taken in his expedition, the high flavour and beautiful red colour of the trouts, which have long given distinction to the lake, led her first to express her thanks to her attendant for so agreeable an addition to her table, especially upon a *jour de jeune;* and then brought on enquiries into the place where the fish had been taken, their size, their peculiarities, the times when they were in season, and a comparison between the Lochleven trouts and those which are found in the lakes and rivers of the south of Scot-

land. The ill humour of Roland Græme was never of an obstinate character. It rolled away like mist before the sun, and he was easily engaged in a keen and animated dissertation about Lochleven trout, and sea trout, and river trout, and bull trout, and char, which never rise to a fly, and par, which some suppose infant salmon, and *herlings*, which frequent the Nith, and *vendisses*, which are only found in the Castle-Loch of Lochmaben; and he was hurrying on with the eager impetuosity and enthusiasm of a young sportsman, when he observed that the smile with which the Queen at first listened to him died languidly away, and that, in spite of her efforts to suppress them, tears rose to her eyes. He stopped suddenly short, and, distressed in his turn, asked, "If he had had the misfortune unwittingly to give displeasure to her Grace?"

"No, my poor boy," replied the Queen; "but as you numbered up the lakes and rivers of my kingdom, imagination cheated me, as it will do, and snatched me

from these dreary walls, away to the romantic streams of Nithsdale, and the royal towers of Lochmaben. O land, which my fathers have so long ruled! of the pleasures which you extend so freely, your Queen is now deprived, and the poorest beggar, who may wander free from one landward town to another, would scorn to change fates with Mary of Scotland!"

"Your Highness," said the Lady Fleming, "will do well to withdraw."

"Come with me then, Fleming," said the Queen, "I would not burthen hearts so young as these are, with the sight of my sorrows."

She accompanied these words with a look of melancholy compassion towards Roland and Catherine, who were now left alone together in the apartment.

The page found his situation not a little embarrassing, for, as every reader has experienced who may have chanced to be in such a situation, it is extremely difficult to maintain the full dignity of an offended person

in the presence of a beautiful girl, whatever reason we may have for being angry with her. Catherine Seyton, on her part, sate still like a lingering ghost, which, conscious of the awe which its presence imposes, is charitably disposed to give the poor confused mortal whom it visits, time to recover his senses, and comply with the grand rule of dæmonology by speaking first. But as Roland seemed in no hurry to avail himself of her condescension, she carried it a step farther, and herself opened the conversation.

"I pray you, fair sir, if it may be permitted me to disturb your august reverie by a question so simple,—what may have become of your rosary?"

"It is lost, madam—lost sometime since," said Roland, partly embarrassed and partly indignant.

"And may I ask farther, sir," said Catherine, "why you have not replaced it with another?—I have half a mind," she said, taking from her pocket a string of ebo-

ny beads adorned with gold, " to bestow one upon you, to keep for my sake, just to remind you of former acquaintance."

There was a little tremulous accent in the tone with which these words were delivered, which at once put to flight Roland Græme's resentment, and brought him to Catherine's side; but she instantly resumed the bold and firm accent which was more familiar to her. " I did not bid you," she said, " come and sit so close by me; for the acquaintance that I spoke of, has been stiff and cold, dead and buried, for this many a day."

" Now Heaven forbid!" said the page; " it has only slept, and now that you desire it should awake, fair Catherine, believe me that a pledge of your returning favour"——

" Nay, nay," said Catherine, withholding the rosary, towards which, as he spoke, he extended his hand, " I have changed my mind on better reflection. What should a heretic do with these holy beads, that have been blessed by the Father of the church himself?"

Roland winced grievously, for he saw plainly which way the discourse was now likely to tend, and felt that it must at all events be embarrassing. "Nay, but," he said, "it was as a token of your own regard that you offered them."

"Ay, fair sir, but that regard attended the faithful subject, the loyal and pious Catholic, the individual who was so solemnly devoted at the same time with myself to the same grand duty; which, you must now understand, was to serve the church and the Queen,—to such a person, if you ever heard of him, was my regard due, and not to him who associates with heretics, and is about to become a renegado."

"I should scarce believe, fair mistress," said Roland, indignantly, "that the vane of your favour turned only to a Catholic wind, considering that it points so plainly to George Douglas, who, I think, is both kingsman and Protestant."

"Think better of George Douglas," said Catherine, "than to believe"——and then

checking herself, as if she had spoken too much, she went on, " I assure you, fair Mr Roland, that all who wish you well are sorry for you."

" Their number is very few, I believe," answered Roland, " and their sorrow, if they feel any, not deeper than ten minutes time will cure."

" They are more numerous, and think more deeply concerning you, than you seem to be aware," answered Catherine. " But perhaps they think wrong—You are the best judge for yourself; and if you prefer gold and church-lands to honour and loyalty, and the faith of your fathers, why should you be hampered in conscience more than others ?"

" May Heaven bear witness for me," said Roland, " that if I entertain any difference of opinion—that is, if I nourish any doubts in point of religion, they have been adopted on the conviction of my own mind, and the suggestion of my conscience !"

" Ay, ay, your conscience—your con-

science !" repeated she with satiric emphasis ; " your conscience is the scape-goat ; I warrant it an able one—it will bear the burthen of one of the best manors of the Abbey of Saint Mary's of Kennaquhair, lately forfeited to our noble Lord the King, by the Abbot and community thereof, for the high crime of fidelity to their religious vows, and now to be granted by the High and Mighty Traitor, and so forth, James, Earl of Murray, to the good squire of dames Roland Græme, for his loyal and faithful service as under-espial, and deputy-turnkey, for securing the person of his lawful sovereign, Queen Mary."

" You misconstrue me cruelly," said the page ; " yes, Catherine, most cruelly—God knows I would protect this poor lady at the risk of my life, or with my life ; but what can I do, what can any one do for her ?"

" Much may be done—enough may be done—all may be done—if men will be but true and honourable, as Scottish men were in the days of Bruce and Wallace. O, Roland, from what an enterprize you are now

withdrawing your heart and hand, through mere fickleness and coldness of spirit!"

"How can I withdraw," said Roland, "from an enterprize which has never been communicated to me?—Has the Queen, or have you, or has any one communicated with me upon any thing for her service which I have refused? Or have you not, all of you, held me at such distance from your counsels, as if I were the most faithless spy since the days of Ganelon?"

"And who," said Catherine Seyton, "would trust the sworn friend, and pupil, and companion, of the heretic preacher Henderson? ay—a proper tutor you have chosen, instead of the excellent Ambrosius, who is now turned out of house and homestead, if indeed he is not languishing in a dungeon, for withstanding the tyranny of Morton, to whose brother the temporalities of that noble house of God have been gifted away by the Regent."

"Is it possible?" said the page; "and is the excellent Father Ambrose in such distress?"

"He would account the news of your falling away from the faith of your fathers," answered Catherine, "a worse mishap than aught that tyranny can inflict on himself."

"But why," said Roland, very much moved, "should you suppose that—that—that it is with me as you say?"

"Do you yourself deny it?" replied Catherine; "do you not admit that you have drank the poison which you should have dashed from your lips?—Do you deny that it now ferments in your veins, if it has not altogether corrupted the springs of life?—Do you deny that you have your doubts, as you proudly term them, respecting what popes and councils have declared it unlawful to doubt of?—Is not your faith wavering, if not overthrown?—Does not the heretic preacher boast his conquest?—Does not the heretic woman of this prison-house hold up thy example to others?—Do not the Queen and the Lady Fleming believe in thy falling away?—And is there any except one—yes I will speak it out, and think as lightly

as you please of my good will—is there one except myself that holds even a lingering hope that you may yet prove what we once all believed of you ?"

" I know not," said our poor page, much embarrassed by the view which was thus presented to him of the conduct he was expected to pursue, and by a person in whom he was not the less interested that so long residence in Lochleven Castle, with no object so likely to attract his undivided attention, had taken place since since they had first met,—" I know not what you expect of me, or fear from me. I was sent hither to attend Queen Mary, and to her I acknowledge the duty of a servant through life and death. If any one had expected service of another kind, I was not the party to render it. I neither avow nor disclaim the doctrines of the reformed church.—Will you have the truth ? It seems to me that the profligacy of the Catholic clergy has brought this judgment on their own heads, and, for aught I know, it may be for their

reformation. But, for betraying this unhappy Queen, God knows I am guiltless of the thought. Did I believe worse of her, than as her servant I wish—as her subject I dare to do—I would not betray her—far from it—I would aid her in aught which could tend to a fair trial of her cause."

"Enough! enough!" answered Catherine, clasping her hands together; "then thou wilt not desert us if any means are presented, by which, placing our Royal Mistress at freedom, this case may be honestly tried betwixt her and her rebellious subjects."

"Nay—but fair Catherine," replied the page, "hear but what the Lord of Murray said when he sent me hither."

"Hear but what the devil said," replied the maiden, "rather than what a false subject, a false brother, a false counsellor, a false friend said! A man raised from a petty pensioner on the crown's bounty, to be the counsellor of majesty, and the prime distributor of the bounties of the state;—

one with whom rank, fortune, title, consequence, and power, all grew up like a mushroom, by the mere warm good will of the sister, whom, in requital, he hath mewed up in this place of melancholy seclusion—whom, in further requital, he has deposed, and whom, if he dared, he would murder."

"I think not so ill of the Earl of Murray," said Roland Græme; "and sooth to speak," he added, with a slight smile, "it would require some bribe to make me embrace, with firm and desperate resolution, either one side or the other."

"Nay, if that is all," replied Catherine Seyton, in a tone of enthusiasm, "you shall be guerdoned with prayers from oppressed subjects—from dispossessed clergy—from insulted nobles—with immortal praise by future ages—with eager gratitude by the present—with fame on earth, and with felicity in heaven! Your country will thank you—your Queen will be debtor to you—you will achieve at once the highest from

the lowest degree in chivalry—all men will honour, all women will love you—and I, sworn with you so early to the accomplishment of Queen Mary's freedom, will—yes I will, love you better than ever sister loved brother."

"Say on—say on," said Roland, kneeling on one knee, and taking her hand, which in the warmth of her exhortation, Catherine held towards him.

"Nay," said she, pausing, "I have already said too much—far too much, if I prevail not with you—far too little if I do. But I prevail," she continued, seeing that the countenance of the youth she addressed returned the enthusiasm of her own—"I prevail; or rather the good cause prevails through its own strength—thus I devote thee to it." And as she spoke she approached her finger to the brow of the astonished youth; and, without touching it, signed the cross over his forehead—stooped her face towards him, and seemed to kiss the empty space in which she had traced the symbol;

then starting up and extricating herself from his grasp, darted into the Queen's apartment.

Roland Græme remained as the enthusiastic maiden had left him, kneeling on one knee, with breath withheld, and with eyes fixed upon the space which the fairy form of Catherine Seyton had so lately occupied. If his thoughts were not of unmixed delight, they at least partook of that thrilling and intoxicating, though mingled sense of pain and pleasure, the most overpowering which life offers in its blended cup. He rose and retired slowly; and although the chaplain Mr Henderson preached on that evening his best sermon against the errors of popery, I would not engage that he was followed accurately through the train of his reasoning by the young proselyte, with a view to whose especial benefit he had handled the subject.

CHAPTER X.

And when Love's torch hath set the heart in flame,
Comes Seignor Reason, with his saws and cautions,
Giving such aid as the old grey-beard Sexton,
Who from the church-vault drags his crazy engine,
To ply its dribbling ineffectual streamlet
Against a conflagration.

Old Play.

In a musing mood, Roland Græme upon the ensuing morning betook himself to the battlements of the castle, as a spot where he might indulge the course of his thick-coming fancies with least chance of interruption. But his place of retirement was in the present case ill chosen, for he was presently joined by Master Elias Henderson.

"I sought you, young man," said the preacher, "having to speak of something which concerns you nearly."

The page had no pretence for avoiding the conference which the chaplain thus of-

fered, though he felt that it might prove an embarrassing one.

"In teaching thee, as far as my feeble knowledge hath permitted, thy duty towards God," said the chaplain, "there are particulars of your duty towards man, upon which I was unwilling long or much to insist. You are here in the service of a lady, honourable as touching her birth, deserving of all compassion as respects her misfortunes, and garnished with even but too many of those outward qualities which win men's regard and affection. Have you ever considered your regard to this Lady Mary of Scotland, in its true light and bearing?"

"I trust, reverend sir," replied Roland Græme, "that I am well aware of the duties a servant in my condition owes to his royal mistress, especially in her lowly and distressed condition."

"True," answered the preacher, "but it is even that honest feeling which may, in the Lady Mary's case, carry thee into great crime and treachery."

"How so, reverend sir?" replied the page; "I profess I understand you not."

"I speak to you not of the crimes of this ill-advised lady," said the preacher; "they are not subjects for the ears of her sworn servant. But it is enough to say, that this unhappy person hath rejected more offers of grace, more hopes of glory, than ever were held out to earthly princes; and that she is now, her day of favour being passed, sequestered in this lonely castle, for the common weal of the people of Scotland, and it may be for the benefit of her own soul."

"Reverend sir," said Roland, somewhat impatiently, "I am but too well aware that my unfortunate mistress is imprisoned, since I have the misfortune to share in her restraint myself—of which, to speak sooth, I am heartily weary."

"It is even of that which I am about to speak," said the chaplain mildly; "but first, my good Roland, look forth on the pleasant prospect of yonder cultivated plain. You see, where the smoke arises, yonder village stand-

ing half hidden by the trees, and you know it to be the dwelling-place of peace and industry. From space to space, each by the side of its own stream, you see the gray towers of barons, with cottages interspersed; and you know that they also, with their household, are now living in unity; the lance hung up on the wall, and the sword resting in its sheath. —You see, too, more than one fair church, where the pure waters of life are offered to the thirsty, and where the hungry are refreshed with spiritual food.—What would he deserve, who should bring fire and slaughter into so fair and happy a scene—who should bare the swords of the gentry and turn them against each other—who should give tower and cottage to the flames, and slake the embers with the blood of the in-dwellers?—What would he deserve who should lift up again that ancient Dagon of Superstition, whom the worthies of the time have beaten down, and who should once more make the churches of God the high places of Baal?"

"You have limned a frightful picture, reverend sir," said Roland Græme; "yet I guess not whom you would charge with the purpose of effecting a change so horrible."

"God forbid," replied the preacher, "that I should say to thee, thou art the man.—Yet beware, Roland Græme, that thou, in serving thy mistress, hold fast the still higher service which thou owest to the peace of thy country, and the prosperity of her inhabitants; else, Roland Græme, thou mayest be the very man upon whose head will fall the curses and assured punishment due to such work. If thou art won by the song of these syrens to aid that unhappy lady's escape from this place of penitence and security, it is over with the peace of Scotland's cottages, and with the prosperity of her palaces—and the babe unborn shall curse the name of the man, who gave inlet to the disorder which will follow the war betwixt the mother and the son."

"I know of no such plan, reverend sir,"

answered the page, "and therefore can aid none such. My duty towards the Queen has been simply that of an attendant; it is a task of which, at times, I would willingly have been freed, nevertheless——"

"It is to prepare thee for the enjoyment of something more of liberty," said the preacher, "that I have endeavoured to impress upon you the deep responsibility under which your office must be discharged. George Douglas hath told the Lady Lochleven that you are weary of this service, and my intercession hath partly determined her good ladyship, that, as your discharge cannot be granted, you shall, instead, be employed in certain commissions on the mainland, which have hitherto been discharged by other persons of confidence. Wherefore, come with me to the lady, for even to-day such duty will be imposed on you."

"I trust you will hold me excused, reverend sir," said the page, who felt that an increase of confidence on the part of the

Lady of the Castle and her family would render his situation in a moral view doubly embarrassing, "one cannot serve two masters—and I much fear that my mistress will not hold me excused for taking employment under another."

"Fear not that," said the preacher, "her consent shall be asked and obtained. I fear she will yield it but too easily, as hoping to avail herself of your agency to maintain correspondence with her friends, as those falsely call themselves, who would make her name the watch-word for civil war."

"And thus," said the page, "I will be exposed to suspicion on all sides; for my mistress will consider me as a spy placed on her by her enemies, seeing me so far trusted by them; and the Lady Lochleven will never cease to suspect the possibility of my betraying her, because circumstances put it into my power to do so—I would rather remain as I am."

There followed a pause of one or two minutes, during which Henderson looked

steadily in Roland's countenance, as if desirous to ascertain whether there was not more in the answer than the precise words seemed to imply. He failed in this point, however; for Roland, bred a page from childhood, knew how to assume a sullen petted cast of countenance, well enough calculated to hide all internal emotions.

"I understand thee not, Roland," said the preacher, "or rather thou thinkest on this matter more deeply than I apprehended to be in thy nature. Methought, the delight of going on shore with thy bow, or thy gun, or thy angling-rod, would have borne away all other feelings."

"And so it would," replied Roland, who perceived the danger of suffering Henderson's half-raised suspicions to become fully awake, "I would have thought of nothing but the gun and the oar, and the wild water-fowl that tempt me by sailing among the sedges yonder so far out of flight-shot, had you not spoken of my going on shore as what was to occasion burning of town

and tower, the downfall of the evangele, and the up-setting of the mass."

"Follow me, then," said Henderson, "and we will seek the Lady Lochleven."

They found her at breakfast with her grandson George Douglas—"Peace be with your ladyship," said the preacher, bowing to his patroness, "Roland Græme awaits your order."

"Young man," said the lady, "our chaplain hath warranted for thy fidelity, and we are determined to give you certain errands to do for us in our town of Kinross."

"Not by my advice," said Douglas coldly.

"I said not that it was," answered the lady, something sharply. "The mother of thy father may, I should think, be old enough to judge for herself in a matter so simple. —Thou wilt take the skiff, Roland, and two of my people, whom Dryfesdale or Randal will order out, and fetch off certain stuff of plate and hangings, which should last night be lodged at Kinross by the wains from Edinburgh."

"And give this packet," said George Douglas, "to a servant of ours, whom you will find in waiting there.—It is the report to my father," he added, looking towards the grandmother, who acquiesced by bending her head.

"I have already mentioned to Master Henderson," said Roland Græme, "that, as my duty requires my attendance on the Queen, her Grace's permission for my journey ought to be obtained before I can undertake your commission."

"Look to it, my son," said the old lady, "the scruple of the youth is honourable."

"Craving your pardon, madam, I have no wish to force myself on her presence thus early," said Douglas, in an indifferent tone; "it might displease her, and were no way agreeable to me."

"And I," said the Lady Lochleven, "although her temper hath been more gentle of late, have no will to undergo, without necessity, the rancour of her wit."

"Under your permission, madam," said

the chaplain, " I will myself render your request to the Queen. During my long residence in this house she hath not deigned to see me in private, or to hear my doctrine; yet so may Heaven prosper my labours, as love for her soul, and desire to bring her into the right path, was my chief desire for coming hither."

" Take care, Master Henderson," said Douglas, in a tone which seemed almost sarcastic, " lest you rush hastily on an adventure to which you have no vocation—you are learned, and know the adage, *Ne accesseris in consilium nisi vocatus.*—Who hath required this at your hand?"

" The Master to whose service I am called," answered the preacher, looking upward, " He who hath commanded me to be earnest in season and out of season."

" Your acquaintance hath not been much, I think, with courts or princes," continued the young Esquire.

" No, sir," replied Henderson, " but,

like my Master Knox, I see nothing frightful in the fair face of a pretty lady."

"My son," said the Lady of Lochleven, "quench not the good man's zeal—let him do the errand to this unhappy Princess."

"With more willingness than I would do it myself," said George Douglas. Yet something in his manner appeared to contradict his words.

The minister went accordingly, and, demanding an audience of the imprisoned Princess, was admitted. He found her with her ladies engaged in the daily task of embroidery. The Queen received him with that courtesy, which, in ordinary cases, she used towards all who approached her, and the clergyman, in opening his commission, was obviously somewhat more embarrassed than he had expected to be.—"The good Lady of Lochleven—may it please your Grace"——

He made a short pause, during which Mary said, with a smile, "My Grace would,

in truth, be well pleased, were the Lady Lochleven our good lady—But go on—what is the will of the good Lady of Lochleven ?"

"She desires, madam," said the chaplain, "that your Grace will permit this young gentleman, your page, Roland Græme, to pass to Kinross to look after some household stuff and hangings, sent hither for the better furnishing your Grace's apartments."

"The Lady of Lochleven," said the Queen, "uses needless ceremony, in requesting our permission for that which stands within her own pleasure. We well know that this young gentleman's attendance on us had not been so long permitted, were he not thought to be more at the command of that good lady than at ours.—But we chearfully yield consent that he shall go on her errand—with our will we would doom no living creature to the captivity which we ourselves must suffer."

"Ay, madam," answered the preacher, "and it is doubtless natural for humanity

to quarrel with its prison-house. Yet there have been those, who have found that time spent in the house of temporal captivity, may be so employed as to redeem us from spiritual slavery."

"I apprehend your meaning, sir," replied the Queen, "but I have heard your apostle—I have heard Master John Knox; and were I to be perverted, I would willingly resign to the ablest and most powerful of heresiarchs, the poor honour he might acquire by overcoming my faith and my hope."

"Madam," said the preacher, "it is not to the talents or skill of the husbandman, that God gives the increase—the words which were offered in vain by him whom you justly call our apostle, during the bustle and gaiety of a court, may yet find better acceptance during the leisure for reflection which this place affords. God knows, lady, that I speak in singleness of heart, as one who would as soon compare himself to the immortal angels, as to the holy man

whom you have named. Yet would you but condescend to apply to their noblest use, those talents and that learning which all allow you to be possessed of—would you afford us but the slightest hope that you would hear and regard what can be urged against the blinded superstition and idolatry in which you are brought up, sure am I, that the most powerfully gifted of my brethren, that even John Knox himself, would hasten hither, and account the rescue of your single soul from the nets of Romish error"——

"I am obliged to you and to them for their charity," said Mary; "but as I have at present but one presence-chamber, I will reluctantly see it converted into a Huguenot synod."

"At least, madam, be not thus obstinately blinded in your errors! Hear one who has hungered and thirsted, watched and prayed, to undertake the good work of your conversion, and who would be content to die the instant that a work so advantageous

for yourself and so beneficial to Scotland were accomplished—Yes, lady, could I but shake the remaining pillar of the heathen temple in this land—and that permit me to term your faith in the delusions of Rome—I could be content to die overwhelmed in the ruins."

"I will not insult your zeal, sir," replied Mary, "by saying you are more likely to make sport for the Philistines than to overwhelm them—your charity claims my thanks, for it is warmly expressed and may be truly purposed—But believe as well of me as I am willing to do of you, and think that I may be as anxious to recal you to the ancient and only road, as you are to teach me your new bye-ways to paradise."

"Then, madam, if such be your generous purpose," said Henderson, eagerly, "what hinders that we should dedicate some part of that time, unhappily now too much at your Grace's disposal, to discuss a question so weighty? You, by report of all men, are both learned and witty, and I, though with-

out such advantage, am strong in my cause as in a tower of defence. Why should we not spend some space in endeavouring to discover which of us hath the wrong side in this most important matter?"

"Nay," said Queen Mary, "I never alleged my force was strong enough to accept of a combat *en champ clos*, with a scholar and a polemic. Besides, the match is not equal. You, sir, might retire when you felt the battle go against you, while I am tied to the stake, and have no permission to say the debate wearies me.—I would be alone."

She curtsied low to him as she uttered these words; and Henderson, whose zeal was indeed ardent, but did not extend to the neglect of delicacy, bowed in return, and prepared to withdraw.

"I would," he said, "that my earnest wish, my most zealous prayer, could procure to your Grace any blessing or comfort, but especially that in which alone blessing or comfort is, as easily as the slight-

est intimation of your wish will remove me from your presence."

He was in the act of departing, when Mary said to him, with much courtesy, "Do me no injury in your thoughts, good sir; it may be, that if my time here be protracted longer—as surely I hope it will not, trusting that either my rebel subjects will repent of their disloyalty, or that my faithful lieges will obtain the upper hand—but if my time be here protracted, it may be I shall have no displeasure in hearing one who seems so reasonable and compassionate as yourself, and I may hazard your contempt by endeavouring to recollect and repeat the reasons which schoolmen and councils give for the faith that is in me,—although I fear that, God help me! my Latin has deserted me with my other possessions. This must, however, be for another day. Meanwhile, sir, let the Lady of Lochleven employ my page as she lists—I will not afford suspicion by speaking a word to him before he goes.—Roland

Græme, my friend, lose not an opportunity of amusing thyself—dance, sing, run, and leap—all may be done merrily on the main land; but he must have more than quicksilver in his veins who could frolic here."

"Alas! madam," said the preacher, "to what is it you exhort the youth, while time passes, and eternity summons! Can our salvation be insured by idle mirth, or our good work wrought out without fear and trembling?"

"I cannot fear or tremble," replied the Queen; "to Mary Stuart such emotions are unknown. But, if weeping and sorrow on my part will atone for the boy enjoying an hour of boyish pleasure, be assured the penance shall be duly paid."

"Nay, but, gracious lady," said the preacher, "in this you greatly err;—our tears and our sorrows are all too little for our own faults and follies, nor can we transfer them, as your church falsely teaches, to the benefit of others."

"May I pray you, sir," answered the

Queen, " with as little offence as such a prayer may import, to transfer yourself elsewhere. We are sick at heart, and may not now be disturbed with further controversy —and thou, Roland, take this little purse ;" (then turning to the divine, she said, shewing its contents,) " Look, reverend sir—it contains only these two or three gold testoons, a coin which, though bearing my own poor features, I have ever found more active against me than on my side, just as my subjects take arms against me, with my own name for their summons and signal.—Take this purse, that thou mayest want no means of amusement. Fail not—fail not to bring me back news from Kinross, only let it be such as, without suspicion or offence, may be told in the presence of this reverend gentleman, or of the good Lady Lochleven herself."

The last hint was too irresistible to be withstood ; and Henderson withdrew, half mortified, half pleased, with his reception ; for Mary, from long habit, and the address

which was natural to her, had learned, in an extraordinary degree, the art of evading discourse which was disagreeable to her feelings or prejudices, without affronting those by whom it was proffered.

Roland Græme retired with the chaplain, at a signal from his lady; but it did not escape him, that as he left the room, stepping backwards, and making the deep obeisance due to royalty, Catherine Seyton held up her slender fore-finger, with a gesture which he alone could witness, and which seemed to say, "Remember what has passed betwixt us."

Roland Græme had now his last charge from the Lady of Lochleven. "There are revels," she said, "this day at the village—my son's authority is, as yet, unable to prevent these continued workings of the ancient leaven of folly which the Romish priests have kneaded into the very souls of the Scottish peasantry. I do not command thee to abstain from them—that would be only to lay a snare for thy folly, or to teach

thee falsehood; but enjoy these vanities with moderation, and mark them as what thou must soon learn to renounce and contemn. Our chamberlain at Kinross, Luke Lundin,—Doctor, as he foolishly calleth himself—will acquaint thee what is to be done in the matter about which thou goest. Remember thou art trusted—shew thyself, therefore, worthy of trust."

When we recollect that Roland Græme was not yet nineteen, and that he had spent his whole life in the solitary Castle of Avenel, excepting the few hours he had passed in Edinburgh, and his late residence at Lochleven, (the latter period having very little served to enlarge his acquaintance with the gay world,) we cannot wonder that his heart beat high with hope and curiosity, at the hope of partaking the sport even of a country wake. He hastened to his little cabin, and turned over the wardrobe with which (in every respect becoming his station) he had been supplied from Edinburgh, probably by order of the Earl of Murray.

By the Queen's command he had hitherto waited upon her in mourning, or at least in sad-coloured raiment. Her condition, she said, admitted of nothing more gay. But now he selected the gayest dress his wardrobe afforded; composed of scarlet, slashed with black satin, the royal colours of Scotland—combed his long curled hair—disposed his chain and medal round a beaver hat of the newest block; and with the gay faulchion which had reached him in so mysterious a manner, hung by his side in an embroidered belt, his apparel, added to his natural frank mien and handsome form, made a most commendable and pleasing specimen of the young gallant of the period. He sought to make his parting reverence to the Queen and her ladies, but old Dryfesdale hurried him to the boat.

"We will have no private audiences," he said, "my master; since you are to be trusted with somewhat, we will try at least to save thee from the temptation of opportunity. God help thee, child," he added, with

a glance of contempt at his gay clothes, "an the bear-ward be yonder from Saint Andrews, have a care thou go not near him."

"And wherefore, I pray you?" said Roland.

"Lest he take thee for one of his run-away jack-an-apes," answered the steward, smiling sourly.

"I wear not my clothes at thy cost," said Roland indignantly.

"Nor at thine own either, my son," replied the steward, "else would thy garb better resemble thy merit."

Roland Græme suppressed with difficulty the repartee which arose to his lips, and, wrapping his scarlet mantle around him, threw himself into the boat, which two rowers, themselves urged by curiosity to see the revels, pulled stoutly towards the west end of the lake. As they put off, Roland thought he could discover the face of Catherine Seyton, though carefully withdrawn from observation, peeping from a

loophole to view his departure. He pulled off his hat, and held it up as a token that he saw and wished her adieu. A white kerchief waved for a second across the window, and for the rest of the little voyage, the thoughts of Catherine Seyton disputed ground in his breast with the expectations excited by the approaching revel. As they approached nigher and nigher to the shore, the sounds of mirth and music, the laugh, the halloo, and the shout, came thicker upon the ear, and in a trice the boat was moored, and Roland Græme hastened in quest of the chamberlain, that, being informed what time he had to his own disposal, he might lay it out to the best advantage.

CHAPTER XI.

Room for the master of the ring, ye swains,
Divide your crowded ranks—before him march
The rural minstrelsy, the rattling drum,
The clamorous war-pipe, and far-echoing horn.
Rural Sports.—SOMERVILLE.

No long space intervened ere Roland Græme was able to discover among the crowd of revellers, who gambolled upon the open space which extends betwixt the village and the lake, a person of so great importance as Doctor Luke Lundin, upon whom devolved officially the charge of representing the lord of the land, and who was attended for support of his authority by a piper, a drummer, and four sturdy clowns armed with rusty halberts, garnished with party-coloured ribbands, myrmidons, who, early as the day was, had al-

ready broken more than one head in the awful names of the Laird of Lochleven and his chamberlain.

As soon as this dignitary was informed that the castle skiff had arrived with a gallant, dressed like a lord's son at the least, who desired presently to speak with him, he adjusted his ruff and his black coat, turned round his girdle till the garnished hilt of his long rapier became visible, and walked with due solemnity towards the beach. Solemn indeed he was entitled to be, even on less important occasions, for he had been bred to the venerable study of medicine, as those acquainted with the science very soon discovered from the aphorisms which ornamented his discourse. His success had not been equal to his pretensions; but as he was a native of the neighbouring Kingdom of Fife, and bore distant relation to, or dependance upon, the ancient family of Lundin of that ilk, who were bound in close friendship with the house of Lochleven, he had, through their inte-

rest, got planted comfortably enough in his present station upon the banks of that beautiful lake. The profits of his chamberlainry being moderate, especially in these unsettled times, he had eked it out a little with some practice in his original profession; and it was said that the inhabitants of the village and barony of Kinross, were not more effectually thirled (which may be translated enthralled) to the baron's mill, than they were to the medical monopoly of the chamberlain. Woe betide the family of the rich boor, who presumed to depart this life without a passport from Doctor Luke Lundin! for if his representatives had aught to settle with the baron, as it seldom happened otherwise, they were sure to find a cold friend in the chamberlain. He was considerate enough, however, gratuitously to help the poor out of their ailments, and sometimes out of all their other distresses at the same time.

Formal, in a double proportion, both as a physician and as a person in office, and

proud of the scraps of learning which rendered his language almost universally unintelligible, Doctor Luke Lundin approached the beach, and hailed the page as he advanced towards him.—" The freshness of the morning upon you, fair sir—You are sent, I warrant me, to see if we observe here the regimen which her good ladyship hath prescribed, for eschewing all superstitious ceremonies and idle anilities in these our revels. I am aware that her good ladyship would willingly have altogether abolished and abrogated them—But as I had the honour to quote to her from the works of the learned Hercules of Saxony, *omnis curatio est vel canonica vel coacta*, that is, fair sir, (for silk and velvet have seldom their Latin *ad unguem*,) every cure must be wrought either by art and induction of rule, or by constraint; and the wise physician chuseth the former. Which argument her ladyship being pleased to allow well of, I have made it my business so to blend in-

struction and caution with delight, (*fiat mixtio*, as we say) that I can answer that the vulgar mind will be defæcated and purged of anile, and popish fooleries by the medicament adhibited, so that the *primæ viæ* being cleansed, Master Henderson, or any other able pastor, may at will throw in tonics, and effectuate a perfect moral cure, *tuto, cito, jucundo.*"

"I have no charge, Doctor Lundin," replied the page——

"Call me not doctor," said the chamberlain, "since I have laid aside my furred gown and bonnet, and retired me into this temporality of chamberlainship."

"O, sir," said the page, who was no stranger by report to the character of this original, "the cowl makes not the monk, neither the cord the friar—we have all heard of the cures wrought by Doctor Lundin."

"Toys, young sir—trifles," answered the leech, with grave disclamation of superior skill; "the hit-or-miss practice of a poor

retired gentleman, in a short cloak and doublet—Marry, Heaven sent its blessing —and this I must say, better fashioned mediciners have brought fewer patients through —*longa robba corta scienzia*, saith the Italian—ha, fair sir, you have the language?"

Roland Græme did not think it necessary to expound to this learned Theban whether he understood him or no; but, leaving that matter uncertain, he told him he came in quest of certain packages which should have arrived at Kinross, and been placed under the chamberlain's charge the evening before.

"Body o' me!" said Doctor Lundin, "I fear our common carrier, John Auchtermuchty, hath met with some mischance, that he came not up last night with his wains—bad land this to journey in, my master; and the fool will travel by night too, although, (besides all maladies from your *tussis* to your *pestis*, which walk abroad in the night-air,) he may well fall in with half

a dozen swash-bucklers, who will ease him at once of his baggage and his earthly complaints. I must send forth to enquire after him, since he hath stuff of the honourable household on hand—and, by our lady, he hath stuff of mine too—certain drugs sent me from the city for composition of my Alexipharmics—this gear must be looked to.—Hodge," said he, addressing one of his redoubted body-guard, " do thou and Toby Telford take the mickle brown aver and the black cut-tailed mare, and make out towards the Keiry-craigs, and see what tidings you can have of Auchtermuchty and his wains—I trust it is only the medicine of the pottle-pot, (being the only *medicamentum* which the beast useth) which hath caused him to tarry on the road. Take the ribbands from your halberds, you knaves, and get on your jacks, plate-sleeves, and knapsculls, that your presence may work some terror if you meet with opposers." He then added, turning to Roland Græme, " I warrant me we shall have news of the

wains in brief season. Meantime, it will please you to look upon the sports; but first to enter my poor lodging and take your morning's cup. For what saith the school of Salerno?

Poculum mane haustum
Restaurat naturam exhaustam."

"Your learning is too profound for me," replied the page; "and so would your draught be likewise, I fear."

"Not a whit, fair sir—a cordial cup of sack, impregnated with wormwood, is the best anti-pestilential draught; and, to speak truth, the pestilential miasmata are now very rife in the atmosphere. We live in a happy time, young man," continued he, in a tone of grave irony, "and have many blessings unknown to our fathers—Here are two sovereigns in the land, a regnant and a claimant—that is enough of one good thing—but if any one wants more, he may find a king in every peel-house in the country; so if we lack government, it is not for want of governors—Then have we a civil

war to refresh us every year, and to prevent our population from starving for want of food—and for the same purpose, we have the Plague proposing us a visit, the best of all recipes for thinning a land, and converting younger brothers into elder ones. Well, each man in his vocation. You young fellows of the sword desire to wrestle, fence, or so forth, with some expert adversary; and for my part, I love to match myself for life or death against that same Plague."

As they proceeded up the street of the little village towards the doctor's lodgings, his attention was successively occupied by the various personages whom he met, and pointed out to the notice of his companion.

"Do you see that fellow with the red bonnet, the blue jerkin, and the great rough batton in his hand?—I believe that clown hath the strength of a tower—he has lived fifty years in the world, and never encouraged the liberal sciences by buying one pennyworth of medicaments.—But see you that man with the *facies hippocratica?*" said

he, pointing out a thin peasant, with swelled legs, and a most cadaverous countenance; "that I call one of the worthiest men in the barony—he breakfasts, luncheons, dines, and sups by my advice, and not without my medicine; and, for his own single part, will go farther to clear out a moderate stock of pharmaceutics, than half the country besides.—How do you, my honest friend?" said he to the party in question, with a tone of condolence.

"Very weakly, sir, since I took the electuary," answered the patient; "it neighboured ill with the two spoonfuls of pease-porridge and the kirn-milk."

"Pease-porridge and kirn-milk! Have you been under medicine these ten years, and keep your diet so ill?—the next morning take the electuary by itself, and touch nothing for six hours." The poor object bowed, and shuffled off.

The next whom the Doctor deigned to take notice of, was a lame fellow, by whom the honour was altogether undeserved, for

at sight of the mediciner, he began to shuffle away in the crowd as fast as his infirmities would permit.

"There is an ungrateful hound for you," said Doctor Lundin; "I cured him of the gout in his feet, and now he talks of the chargeableness of medicine, and makes the first use of his restored legs to fly from his physician. His *podagra* hath become a *chiragra*, as honest Martial hath it—the gout has got into his fingers, and he cannot draw his purse. Old saying, and true,

Præmia cum poscit medicus, Sathan est.

We are angels when we come to cure—devils when we ask payment—but I will administer a purgation to his purse, I warrant him. There is his brother too, a sordid chuff.—So ho there! Saunders Darlet! you have been ill I hear?"

"Just got the turn, as I was thinking to send to your honour, and I am brawly now again—it was nae great thing that ailed me."

"Hark you, sirrah," said the Doctor, "I trust you remember you are owing to the laird four stones of barley-meal, and a bow of oats; and I would have you send no more such kain-fowls as you sent last season, that looked as wretchedly as patients just dismissed from a plague-hospital; and there is hard money owing besides."

"I was thinking, sir," said the man, *more Scotico*, that is, returning no direct answer on the subject on which he was addressed, "my best way would be to come down to your honour, and take your advice yet, in case my trouble should come back."

"Do so then, knave," replied Lundin, "and remember what Ecclesiasticus saith—'Give place to the physician—let him not go from thee, for thou hast need of him.'"

His exhortation was interrupted by an apparition, which seemed to strike the Doctor with as much horror and surprise, as his own visage inflicted upon sundry of those persons whom he had addressed.

The figure which produced this effect on

the Esculapius of the village, was that of a tall old woman, who wore a high-crowned hat and muffler. The first of these habiliments added apparently to her stature, and the other served to conceal the lower part of her face, and as the hat itself was slouched, little could be seen besides two brown cheek-bones, and the eyes of swarthy fire, that gleamed from under two shaggy grey eye-brows. She was dressed in a long dark-coloured robe, of unusual fashion, bordered at the skirts, and on the stomacher, with a sort of white trimming resembling the Jewish phylacteries, on which were wrought the characters of some unknown language. She held in her hand a walking staff of black ebony.

"By the soul of Celsus," said Doctor Luke Lundin, "it is old Mother Nicneven herself—she hath come to beard me within mine own bounds, and in the very execution of mine office. Have at thy coat, Old Woman, as the song says—Hob Anster, let her presently be seized and com-

mitted to the tolbooth; and if there are any zealous brethren here who would give the hag her deserts, and duck her, as a witch, in the loch, I pray let them in no way be hindered."

But the myrmidons of Doctor Lundin shewed in this case no alacrity to do his bidding. Hob Anster even ventured to remonstrate in the name of himself and his brethren. "To be sure he was to do his honour's bidding; and for a' that folks said about the skill and the witcheries of Mother Nicneven, he would put his trust in God, and his hand on her collar, without dreadour. But she was no common spae-wife this Mother Nicneven, like Jean Jopp that lived in the Brierie-baulk. She had lords and lairds that would ruffle for her. There was Moncrief of Tippermalloch, that was popish, and the Laird of Carslogie, a kenn'd Queen's man, were in the fair, with wha kenn'd how mony swords and bucklers at their back; and they would be sure to make a break-out if the officers meddled with

the auld popish witch-wife, who was sae weel friended; mair especially as the laird's best men, such as were not in the Castle, were in Edinburgh with him, and he doubted his honour the Doctor would find ower few to make a good backing, if blades were bare."

The Doctor listened unwillingly to this prudential counsel, and was only comforted by the faithful promise of his satellite, that "the old woman should," as he expressed it, "be ta'en canny the next time she trespassed on the bounds."

"And in that event," said the Doctor to his companion, "fire and faggot shall be the best of her welcome."

This he spoke in hearing of the dame herself, who even then, and in passing the Doctor, shot towards him from under her grey eye-brows a look of the most insulting and contemptuous superiority.

"This way," continued the physician, "this way," marshalling his guest into his lodging,—"take care you stumble not over

a retort, for it is hazardous for the ignorant to walk in the ways of art."

The page found all reason for the caution; for besides stuffed birds, and lizards, and snakes bottled up, and bundles of simples made up, and other parcels spread out to dry, and all the confusion, not to mention the confused and sickening smells, incidental to a druggist's stock in trade, he had also to avoid heaps of charcoal, crucibles, bolt-heads, stoves, and the other furniture of a chemical laboratory.

Amongst his other philosophical qualities, Doctor Lundin failed not to be a confused sloven, and his old dame housekeeper, whose life, as she said, was spent in "redding him up," had trotted off to the mart of gaiety with other and younger folks. Much clattering and jangling therefore there was among jars and bottles and vials, ere the Doctor produced the salutiferous potion which he recommended so strongly, and a search equally long and noisy follow-

ed, among broken cans and cracked pipkins, ere he could bring forth a cup out of which to drink it. Both matters being at length achieved, the Doctor set the example to his guest, by quaffing off a cup of the cordial, and smacking his lips with approbation as it descended his gullet. Roland, in turn, submitted to swallow the potion which his host so earnestly recommended, but which he found so insufferably bitter, that he became eager to escape from the laboratory in search of a draught of fair water to expel the taste. In spite of his efforts, he was nevertheless detained by the garrulity of his host, till he gave him some account of Mother Nicneven.

"I care not to speak of her," said the Doctor, "in the open air, and among the throng of people; not for fright, like yon cowardly dog Anster, but because I would give no occasion for a fray, having no leisure to look to stabs, slashes, and broken bones. Men call the old hag a prophetess—I do scarce believe she could foretell when a

brood of chickens will chip the shell—Men say she reads the heavens—my black bitch knows as much of them when she sits baying the moon—Men pretend the old wretch is a sorceress, a witch, and what not—*Inter nos*, I will never contradict a rumour which may bring her to the stake which she so richly deserves; but neither will I believe that the tales of witches which they din into our ears are aught but knavery, cozenage, and old womens' fables."

"In the name of heaven, what is she then," said the page, "that you make such a stir about her?"

"She is one of those cursed old women," replied the physician, "who take currently and impudently upon themselves to act as advisers and curers of the sick, on the strength of some trash of herbs, some rhyme of spells, some julep or diet, drink or cordial."

"Nay, go no farther," said the page; "if they brew cordials, evil be their lot and all their partakers'!"

"You say well, young man," said Doctor Lundin; "for mine own part, I know no such pests to the commonwealth as these old incarnate devils, who haunt the chambers of the brain-sick patients, that are mad enough to suffer them to interfere with, disturb, and let, the regular progress of a learned and artificial cure, with their syrups, and their juleps, and diascordum, and mithridate, and my Lady What-shall-call'ums powder, and worthy Dame Trashem's pill; and thus make widows and orphans, and cheat the regular and well studied physician, in order to get the name of wise women and skeely neighbours, and so forth. But no more on't—Mother Nicneven and I will meet one day, and she shall know there is danger in dealing with the doctor."

"It is a true word, and many have found it," said the page; "but, under your favour, I would fain walk abroad for a little, and see these sports."

"It is well moved," said the Doctor, "and I too should be showing myself

abroad.—Moreover, the play waits us, young man—to-day, *totus mundus agit histrionem.*"—And they sallied forth accordingly into the mirthful scene.

END OF VOLUME SECOND.

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